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ABSTRACT

The curriculum guide presents the activities component of the Human Development Program for grade 6. The Human Development Program (HDP) is an affective curricular approach developed by psychologists to aid teachers in instilling responsibility and self-confidence in children. The nucleus of the Human Development Program is a circle session (called the Magic Circle) in which students and teachers share feelings and thoughts for 20 minutes each day. The guide presents topics and directions for 188 sequential Magic Circle sessions. Each session, which constitutes one segment of a unit based upon a theme such as building trust or communication, relates to one of the following areas of personal development: awareness, self-confidence, or social interaction. Sample circle session topics at the sixth grade focus on encouraging positive feelings, thoughts, and behavior; and building trust. The guide also presents information to the teacher on designing the Human Development Program, preparing the Magic Circle sessions, explaining the topic for discussion, leading the daily session, encouraging children to volunteer to lead a session, and helping the children review and summarize what they learned. (Author/DB)

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HUMAN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Uvaldo Palomares, Ed.D. and Geraldine Ball, M.S.

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Level VI Activity Guide

by

Geraldine Ball

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PREFACE

This Level VI Human Development Program Activity Guide has been written and published for the use of sixth grade teachers by the Human Development Training Institute (HDTI). It is one of a set of activity guides for teachers who are interested in offering the Human Development Program, an affective educational curriculum, to the children in their classes. This guide may also be used by other group leaders, such as Girl Scout and Boy Scout leaders, Religious Education teachers, Boy's and Girl's Club Counselors, and parents, to name a few, who work and/or live with children from ten to twelve years of age. Activity Guides for other grade levels, as well as theoretical, supplemental and evaluative materials in the Human Development Program are also available from HDTI.

Each Human Development Program Activity Guide has been written with the idea in mind that many of the things that we have learned in Psychology and Educational Philosophy about the needs of human beings can be brought into the classroom (or community center, church, home, etc.) via a practical, workable tool — the Human Development Program circle session or "Magic Circle". As these materials were created they were carefully researched and field-tested with children in order to see what is meaningful and useful to them. Suggestions for ways to carry out each session, and culminating questions to ask at the end of the session are included with each topic that is presented. Suggested procedures for instituting the program and things to keep in mind as you select topics and lead the circle sessions are also presented, as are a number of synthesizing supplementary activities in a variety of subject areas.

Before embarking on the Human Development Program it is highly recommended that you read the *Methods in Human Development, Theory Manual*. Prior experience with positive affective techniques would be helpful in carrying out the program, and specific training in the Human Development Program would be even more helpful. These workshops may be arranged on a district basis by contacting the Human Development Training Institute.

We at HDTI welcome information from you regarding the training you receive, the usefulness of the Activity Guides, ideas you have generated in the affective realm, and any other feedback or innovations that you may wish to share which will help us to continue to upgrade the program and the training workshops.

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THE TEACHERS, the critical link between these printed pages and the children, for being open and receptive to the Human Development Program and for so generously providing me with information that has led to revision and upgrading of the program,

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Geraldine Ball

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INTRODUCTION

THE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM . . .

is a curricular approach which is designed to give children the opportunity to become constructively involved in developing their own personal effectiveness, self-confidence, and understanding of the causes and effects in interpersonal relationships. It is a *preventive* program, designed to help children understand and respect themselves and each other as human beings. By becoming involved in the program they are given an opportunity to learn useful social skills in order to *prevent* problems that many people struggle with because they did not have the opportunity early enough to learn some important things about themselves and about other people. The program capitalizes on the basic drives of children to achieve mastery and gain approval.

In addition to its preventive nature, the program also functions as a set of systematic strategies for the maintenance and enhancement of mental health. It *systematically* incorporates what master teachers do every day to instill responsibility and self-confidence in children. It is an eclectic developmental and sequential plan, (never coercive, or confrontive) which reduces the chance factor for emotional and social growth in the affective domain. The scope and sequence of the activities provide experiences that develop knowledge and skills needed for effective personal adjustment, ability to communicate with others, success in academic endeavors, and other life challenges.

A number of values and assumptions are basic to the Human Development Program. Among them are:

1. The inherent worth of every human individual.
2. The right of each person to be self-determining.
3. The right (as well as the need) of each person to acceptance and affection.

If we believe that every human being is worthwhile, our interactions with others will reflect this attitude. We will *never* see anyone as being inherently unimportant, worthless, or "bad," although some behaviors may understandably be given these labels. The structure of the Human Development Program reflects the belief that all human beings are valuable on an equal basis. In its content, the program frequently relates to the dichotomy of the person, as one entity, and the person's behavior, as another entity. It is emphasized throughout the program that, while each person is innately worthwhile, our behavior speaks for us, or represents us, to others. The ways in which we behave affect our own lives and the lives of other people.

If every person has the right to self determination, the implication to us, as teachers, is that we have a responsibility to make possibilities for expression and actualization known to children, and then to facilitate their progress as they move toward the goals *that they choose*. In a number of ways participation in the Human Development Program itself is a self-determining situation for each child. The child decides for him/herself how, and to what extent, he/she will become involved in each session. The issue of self determination is also addressed throughout the program. This is done by giving the children the opportunity to become aware of how such imposed determining forces as stereotyping work. The children are also given frequent opportunities to become more aware of their own positive qualities, such as their abilities, strengths, and how they have been effective in overcoming obstacles that they have faced.

If every person has the right to receive acceptance and affection, this implies that we need to *listen* to children when they express their feelings and ideas. We can also find ways to help them learn to do this for each other. When genuine acceptance is given and received, affection is free to grow. The format of the Human Development Program consistently provides a framework for realizing this ideal.

The program is based on the theoretical assumption that a key avenue to maintaining and enhancing mental health and well-being is through the process of verbal interaction. With our complex emotional and intellectual lives, it would be devastating to us if we could not talk about our experiences with each other. When we do share our experiences and our feelings at a level beyond superficiality, we come to realize that all of us experience all of the emotions, but that each of us experiences the emotions in his/her own unique way. This is because different things happen to us.

Every situation in life is different from every other, as all humans are different. By sharing our experiences, and the feelings that go with them, we are enabled to see the basic commonalities among human beings and the individual differences too.

It is another assumption of the program that understanding the foregoing, leads to self understanding and self respect. On this foundation we then grow to understand and respect others and in the process we develop the concern for humanity that is necessary for us to have if we are going to become responsible members of the human family.

THE CIRCLE SESSION . . .

or "Magic Circle" is the nucleus of the Human Development Program. It is a carefully articulated communications system which encourages spontaneous individual expression. In the classroom circle session, the children and their teacher share their feelings and thoughts, and discuss their behavior, daily through verbal group interaction in activities (or sessions) related to emotional and social development. Throughout the twenty to thirty minute session, an atmosphere of acceptance prevails. Children are encouraged to share their feelings genuinely and to learn to listen and give attention to each other.

The role of the teacher (or leader) is to begin the activity by explaining the topic for discussion and to take a turn relating to the topic, perhaps by going first, if necessary. After each child who wishes to speak has had an opportunity, the leader of the session helps the children to review and summarize what was learned in the session. Progressively, the teacher (or leader) says less in each session — giving more of the responsibility to the children as they are ready to assume it. Child leadership training begins when the children are ready to take responsibility for leading their own circle sessions. Their leadership is then gradually expanded as the program progresses.

THE DESIGN OF THE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM . . .

is semi-structural, flexible and open-ended. It is a developmental curriculum in the area of affective education. The experiences in each unit generally prepare children to move into each sequential unit progressively. (See the Human Development Program Overview Chart, pages 3 and 4 for information relating to levels, group arrangements, strategies and objectives, grades pre-school through six.)

The program has been designed to begin with four year olds, but it may be inaugurated at any grade level. Currently available are the *Pre-school and Kindergarten Activity Guide*, and *Levels I, II, III, IV, V and VI*, corresponding to their respective grade levels. *The Human Development Program for Institutionalized Teenagers*, appropriate for all teenage groups, those in correctional institutions in particular, is also available, as are theoretical, supplemental and evaluative materials relating to the program.

Other materials are in the developmental stages. These include: *Human Development Program for Junior High and Senior High School Groups*, *for the Prevention of Drug Abuse*, and *For Career Education*. These materials are presently being researched and developed and will be available at a later date.

Inquiries regarding the program materials and training workshops may be directed to:

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT TRAINING INSTITUTE
7574 University Avenue
La Mesa, California 92041

PARENTS AND COMMUNITY

Due to the ever-increasing, positive trend toward parental and community involvement, teachers and school administrators are urged to inform the community of the objectives and format of the program as it is instituted in the school, or, better yet, prior to its institution. Invitations to parents and community members should be extended so that they might hear about the program and see it in action, first hand. If it is feasible, carry out circle sessions in which the parents and interested members of the community are participants. This has been done in a number of schools with success and is recommended. Awareness topics presented in the first unit of this activity guide are generally well suited for this kind of demonstration.

ACTIVITY GUIDE FOR LEVEL VI

This guide contains directions for 188 Human Development Circle Sessions for the classroom, or other setting. Each circle session topic, or activity, constitutes one segment of a unit, which has a theme, such as *Building Trust*, or *Communicating*. Each unit relates to one of the following three major areas of personal development of the program: Awareness, Mastery (or self-confidence) and Social Interaction.

Sample circle session topics at Level VI are:

"Something I'm Looking Forward To" from an Awareness unit, entitled *Positive Feelings, Thoughts and Behavior* (Page 46).

"How I Show Someone That They Can Trust Me" from a Social Interaction unit, entitled *Building Trust* (Page 61).

"Something I Just Learned How To Do" from a Mastery unit, entitled, *School* (Page 70).

Although a number of the activities address complex issues, they are written in an elementary form so that child leaders as well as teachers, may be able to read and understand them.

USE OF THE TOPICS . . .

Most of the activities — perhaps all of them — will be very appropriate for your group though some may not. As groups differ widely, you may find it necessary to be selective in your use of the activities or use them in an order which you deem more appropriate for your group, than the order in which they are presented in this guide.

Generally speaking, the units are more interchangeable with respect to sequence than are the topics within each unit. Elementary topics are presented first. At times, the intent of these activities is to request an opinion, rather than a personal feeling from the children. Gradually, the topics stimulate more personal (but never intimate) responses. Topics which elicit discussion of negative feelings are not presented until positive ones in the same subject areas have preceded them. Topics at or near the end of each unit are the most advanced and complex.

If you feel the need to delete topics from any given unit, it is recommended that the ones deleted be consecutive ones at the beginning of the unit (if you feel that the children are in need of more advanced topics), or that they be consecutive ones at the end of the unit (if you feel that the children would profit more from topics which are generally more basic). In other words, it would be best to take topics in sequential blocks, rather than deleting them from any given unit irregularly. Often two or more consecutive topics are very closely tied together and should be presented one immediately after the other.

There are exceptions to this rule. Sometimes it is difficult on a Monday, or the first day everyone is back from a vacation, to discuss the topic which would be the next one in the unit sequence with which you are working. Other times during sequential meetings in the week you may sense the group's need for a "lighter" topic before proceeding with the rest of the unit. In these cases, reintroduce a topic from the first Awareness unit. Or, turn to Appendix A and introduce one of the "warm fuzzy" Awareness topics, which you will find there.

Decisions regarding choice of topics should also be made with consideration of your own needs. If you would be uncomfortable leading a session with a particular topic, it might be best not to do it. Your discomfort might be communicated to the children and possibly confuse them. On the other hand, a number of teachers have reported that they have received some important insights and unexpected good feelings from sessions that they held with the children when the topic was one which seemed nebulous at first, or in some way disagreeable, or difficult to carry out.

Once you and the children have learned how a circle session works, you, or the children, may think of unique topics which meet your own particular needs. Two cautions in this regard are: (1) Topics should not become lead-ins for "ax-grinding," and (2) A topic should relate to the affective realm. As one HDP consultant once put it: *"If it 'ain't' about feelings, it 'ain't' a Human Development Program circle session."*

If you are a beginner with the program and you do not feel the need to make adjustments, it is recommended that you follow the guide closely with respect to sequence.

THE SUPPLEMENTARY ACTIVITIES . . .

At the end of each unit, a number of activities relating to the unit theme are presented. These activities have been developed to supplement and enlarge upon what is being learned in the circle sessions and relate to improving communications and relationships among the children. They include experiences in a variety of subject areas and should not be used as substitutes for circle sessions.

Use these activities and/or devise others for all of the subject areas that you teach. A way to achieve confluence or synthesis, a blend between the affective and cognitive domains, in your teaching is to (1) institute programs that are primarily affective in nature, such as the Human Development Program to complement the instructional program, and (2) to find the affective components in the cognitive lessons that you are teaching and focus the attention of the children on them. For example, as the class becomes involved in discussing current events, ask them to consider the ways that the people in the news may have felt as the events occurred and how they feel right now as they look back in retrospect at the event. The feelings of scientists as they tediously work in their laboratories to find serums for diseases, the feelings of the Indians and the Pilgrims when they first met each other, and the feelings of the children themselves as they divide fractions, are all fruitful items for oral discussion, written stories and essays, art, dramas, and the like, which will connect the cognitive and affective realms. It is this kind of an approach that makes learning exciting, meaningful, and relevant.

Overview Chart

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM Levels, Group Arrangements, Strategies, and Objectives Grades Pre-School through Six

Level	Grade	Age	Groupings	Strategies	Objectives
Pre-School		4-5	Single Circle 5-10	Encouragement to talk, listen, succeed.	Improve self-control and ability to listen and express; develop self-confidence and understanding of interpersonal interaction. Tolerance for individual differences. Understanding of universalization principle — emphasis on common human feelings, thoughts and behavior. Increase self-acceptance and listening skills. Begin coping with mixed feelings.
Kindergarten		5-6	Single Circle 8-10	As above. Deal with negative as well as positive topics.	
I	First	6-7	First one circle 8-12; then add self-controlled children to outer ring until whole class is in two concentric rings. Teacher and child leaders alternate.	As above. Discuss 1) ambivalence in feelings, thoughts, behaving, 2) effective and ineffective behavior, 3) reality and fantasy. Discuss variables of inclusion, exclusion, warmth, coldness, making of decisions. Begin leadership experiences.	As above. Effective self-control, ability to comfortably experience ambivalence, improve reality testing, self-confidence, effective meeting of needs, increase responsibility, tolerance, empathy, skill in making helpful suggestions. Sharing in decision making and recognition of leadership abilities.
II	Second	7-8	As above.	As above. Continued presentation of methods of awareness, coping, social interaction. Character development is fostered by challenge, commitment, and direct interpersonal communication with peers. Continued decision-making and child leadership.	As above. Articulation of wide range of experiences in positive and negative feelings, thoughts, and behavior. Self-confidence and positive self-concept. Ability to distinguish between reality and fantasy. Motivation to be responsible, productive, kind. Share in decision-making. Leadership as service, not exploitation. Ability to make helpful suggestions to guide leaders to better functioning.

Overview Chart
(Continued)

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
Levels, Group Arrangements, Strategies, and Objectives
Grades Pre-School through Six

Level	Grade	Age	Groupings	Strategies	Objectives
III	Third	8-9	As above.	As above. Further challenge to self-sufficiency, integration, honesty. Emphasize responsibility in social interaction, keeping commitments.	As above. Self-control as a matter of personal pride. Verbal facility, skillful and tolerant listening. Ability to tolerate ambivalent feelings in self and others. Skill in observing differences between verbalization and performance. Wise decision-making and responsible, constructive leadership. Courage in taking the initiative to build good social relationships.
IV	Fourth	9-10	As above.	As above. Challenge to recognize psychological similarities and differences between the sexes. Role playing. Micro Lab. Experiences with authenticity and duplicity, exploring dreams and practice at problem solving.	As above. Accepting and reflective listening. Deeper self-awareness and understanding of social relationships. Fuller acceptance of responsibility for one's own behavior.
V	Fifth	10-11	Three general plans for articulation, presented.	As above. Focus on importance of flexible outlook and behavior. Units no longer assigned to a certain number of days of the week. Supplemental affective activities presented in a variety of subject areas.	As above. Increased understanding of how trusting relationships are developed. Awareness of the complexities in social situations. Development of a sense of identity. Dealing with role expectations, such as sex role demands. Increasing awareness of one's own capabilities and likeable qualities.
VI	Sixth	11-12	As above.	As above. Focus on responsibility for one's own behavior. Increased supplemental affective activities presented in a variety of subject areas.	As above. Increased self confidence through validation of self and others. Increased sense of self identity and group dynamics. Exploring conflict resolution. Increased understanding of self-determination, choices and decision-making.

LEADING THE CIRCLE SESSION

The following is a thorough plan for a Human Development Program circle session. It covers the major things to keep in mind and a number of answers to "what if . . . ?" questions. Read it now and re-read it at various intervals as you conduct circle sessions.

All of these occurrences will not happen in any one session. Here, however, is a comprehensive statement about the important things to remember as you conduct these "simple, but not easy" sessions:

STARTING THE SESSION:

You aren't teaching a lesson. You're relating to people. Set a positive atmosphere by warmly drawing everyone into the circle. An attitude of seriousness blended with enthusiasm on your part will let the children know that this is an important part of the day's learning experiences and that it is an activity that can be interesting and meaningful. Establish eye contact with each child. Always use their names as you speak to them. Briefly, but clearly, go over the ground rules, i.e.:

1. Each person may have a turn to speak, if he/she wishes to, taking only his/her fair share of the time.
2. Everyone will *listen* to the person who is speaking, without any interruptions, and will accept the speaker's feelings by not confronting him/her in any way,
3. Each person will stay in his/her own space, and,
4. Destructive behavior such as coercing someone to speak, probing, interpreting, or making "put-down" remarks will not be accepted or allowed to continue. (Put-downs make any group experience unsafe. It doesn't matter who is put down, because any put-down means we are all vulnerable. If someone laughs, all must be able to share the fun or it is unsafe. When silence feels comfortable, it is safe.)

From this point on, demonstrate to the children that you *expect* them to remember and abide by the ground rules. Conveying the feeling to them that you think well of them and that you know that they are fully capable of responsible behavior, will in most cases, bring out the very best in children. Let them know that by coming to a session they are committing themselves to listen during the session and to show acceptance and respect to the other children. Preliminary activities related to communication skills are presented in this guide to aid the children in eliminating non-helpful behaviors in their circle sessions. (See pages 27 to 35).

To get things started, tell the children about the activity. *"I'm going to ask a question only you know the answer to . . ."* Then state the topic. Extend a general invitation: *"Who would like to go first?"* If there are no volunteers, respond to the topic yourself, such as, *"A time when I felt happy was last weekend when I went camping in the mountains. I felt so good being in such a beautiful place."* If it is not necessary for you to take your turn first, be sure to do so later.

THE PARTICIPATION PHASE:

Let the children decide individually when they are ready to speak. Ask them to raise their hands so you will know when they are ready. When silences occur, wait patiently. They need time to think about what they are going to say. Others need time to gather courage. After a bit, you might help them to do this by saying, *"Let's all close our eyes and think about . . ."* If more than one child begins to talk at a time, ask all but one to wait and listen. Name the other children and let them know in what order each one will be given their chance to speak. Assure them that everyone will have a turn who wants one. Express your appreciation to those who show that they are willing to wait.

When the children begin to respond, focus your complete attention on the one who is having his/her turn. Take time with the child and accept his/her contribution, even if the child says very little. Ask each one, *"Tell us how you feel about it."* If the children need help, then supply words, e.g., *"Does it give you a good feeling?"* Gradually introduce more "feeling" vocabulary ("pleased", "excited", "proud", etc.). Focus on feelings non-verbally also, with eyes, touch and gesture. (Other questions to ask during the participation phase are also suggested for each activity in this guide.)

Model accepting, rather than judgmental behavior, showing the children that in the circle, each person is respected as his/her unique self. At first they sometimes copy each other, or say what they think you want to hear, probably because they want to be sure that what they say will be accepted. Remember the reason for this behavior. In a general way, assure the group that it is okay for them to tell their real feelings. In time, they will begin to feel safe enough to do so if the atmosphere in the circle is truly an accepting one.

Listening in the circle is essential! It is one of the basic purposes of the program. Make sure that the children understand that listening is expected of everyone. Tell them, *"When you talk, what do you want us to do? What should you remember to do when someone else is talking?"* The most effective way to assure good listening is to model it yourself. Make it obvious that you are listening attentively to each of the children when they speak. Remember what they say and be prepared to repeat it later. Draw the attention of children who do not appear to be listening to the one who is speaking by tactful word or gesture. (In the review phase of the session they will be asked to repeat what others have said.)

Show the children that you want to understand them. If a student says something that you do not understand very well, ask him/her to help you to understand what it was, or ask the other children about it. Then check out their responses with the child who spoke. Give credit to those who understood and listened carefully. In this way, you are making it clear that you do not know everything and that their comments are worthwhile and important.

If some children talk for too long a period of time, it is probably because they feel that now they have the chance and may not get another soon. Remember the reason for the behavior. Help them clarify their thoughts about what they want to talk about — one at a time. Gently guide their attention away from the content of their remarks to their feelings. Without singling him/her out, remind the group, *"Remember, everyone who wants a turn gets one each time we have a circle."* If they can be convinced that it is important that everyone has an opportunity to speak, in time they will help to make sure that everyone does get a turn.

As the activity progresses, concentrate on asking open-ended questions first, as necessary: *"Would you like to tell us more about it, (Shirley)?"* Then ask closed-ended questions. *"How?"* is usually a meaningful question because it can help children to focus their attention on specific behaviors. *"Why?"* is sometimes a meaningful question, but if it comes across as interrogative, it can put the children on the defensive. It also has the disadvantage of taking the children away from concentrating on their feelings. Such closed-ended questions as *"when"* and *"where"*, and especially *"who"*, should be generally avoided because they almost always relate to non-relevant content. After each child has contributed in the circle, show your appreciation to him/her in your own way. Often a simple nod adequately conveys respect and appreciation.

If, after one or two responses, none of the other children have volunteered, try again with: *"Let's close our eyes and think . . ."* Let them know that you understand: *"Some of us may find it difficult to express our feelings in the circle at first, but after we get used to it, we'll find it easier."*

Do not switch to another topic. To do so implies that you will not be satisfied until they speak. Changing to another topic tells the children that you really didn't mean it when you said that they didn't have a turn if they didn't want to. If only one or two children share and everyone else is given the chance to do likewise, but declines, simply proceed to the review and culmination of the session as you ordinarily would. Thank all of the children for being a part of the circle and end the session. In time, almost all children will contribute verbally when they are assured that there is no pressure on them to do so.

In initial sessions, after two or more have responded, point out similarities and differences: *"Do you see that (Maria) and (Henry) have the same kind of feeling, and (Lowell's) is different?"* Make it clear by tone, look, etc., that both similarities and differences are natural, neutral, and acceptable.

Point out important positive interactions between the children such as when the same and different feelings are noticed: *"You smiled when he said that. Have you had the same feeling?"* Also point out the observable ways people handle their feelings: *"When you have a good feeling, you sit*

up straight and smile and I can see your feelings all the way over here!" Allow them to interact with each other directly. If they have questions for each other allow them to ask the questions briefly, as time permits. If they direct the question to you, ask them to redirect it to the individual who can answer it. Do not allow anyone to probe, or interpret, however.

First efforts to speak will often be irrelevant, silly, etc. In the beginning, it is more important to get the students to speak to each other about their feelings than it is to be "right on" the topic. Whatever children say, respect it and go along with it, even when they bring up something that they feel bad about when the topic is "Feeling Good". (The only exception would be when a child interrupts or says something destructive to another group member, which should not be considered acceptable.) Gently guide the conversation back to the subject, after the child's statements have been accepted. Deal with negative topics, such as "When Someone Betrayed My Trust," in the same matter-of-fact way that you would with positive topics. Remain neutral and accepting and be sure not to moralize.

As you begin conducting circle sessions, urge the students to "be themselves" in the circle and to relate personally to one another but not to tell intimate details of their lives. We are interested in each other's personal feelings and ideas, but not information about each other's homes or families that "are none of our business". To explain further, you may suggest that they talk about themselves and keep from telling names of other people. Ask them to share things that wouldn't embarrass them, or anyone else. Explain also that when someone shares their feelings in the circle, the things they tell about should not be brought up again at some later time by anyone except that person. The things that are shared still "belong" to each person who shared them. Each person should be treated with respect both in and out of the circle.

No one should be forced or coerced to talk in the circle if they do not wish to. However, sometimes children do wish very much to participate, but are fearful. They may benefit from your encouragement. If they seem ready to speak, you may gently invite them to do so. If you sense that it will be appropriate, elicit the help of a more secure child to encourage the one who is reticent, by asking questions that will help to clarify the reticent one's thoughts and feelings. Then give credit to both. Children who do not participate verbally at first, will, when they are ready. In the meantime, they are listening and learning.

Sometimes such physical discharge reactions as laughter or yawning may occur in the children. These, being normal releases of tension, should be accepted as are the feelings a child expresses. Sometimes, children cry at school. Remember that the crying, too, is a discharge of hurt or tension. Allow the children their rights to these releases, and give them free, warm attention when they occur.

The circle is an accepting environment, but destructive behavior, such as ridicule, or overt disruption, should not be accepted or allowed to continue. Children should view their participation in the circle as a privilege to be appreciated and utilized. Deal with the needs of disrupters, but keep the focus on the individual who is having his/her turn. If you get maneuvered into dealing with negative attention-getting, the group may decide that that's how to get attention. Try to deal with the disrupter's feelings non-verbally. Touch them lightly on the knee or have them exchange chairs to sit by you, giving as little attention to them in the process as possible. If these measures aren't helpful, it might be a good idea to allow them to hear how you and their peers feel about their actions. If this technique has no immediate effect, ask disrupters to leave the circle, reminding them that their presence is desired, but that their disruptive behavior will not be accepted. At another time have a private talk with children who disrupt. Make sure that they understand that they may be members of the circle when they abide by the ground rules.

The most important thing to remember in this regard is to avoid these kinds of problems in the first place. If your attitude conveys that the circle session is a special time and if you carefully go over the ground rules with the children at first, and again at appropriate intervals, these problems are often prevented. When a child begins to be disruptive, wait until he/she does do something appropriate, such as taking a turn to speak and contributing his/her feelings, or correctly reflecting back to someone in the review what they said, then praise him/her for that positive action. Show him/her that certain actions *will* receive attention and appreciation.

As the students become comfortable in the session and accustomed to the format, you will be able to sense this and "move back" to let them respond more readily to one another, and to you when it's your turn to speak. Take over the activity only when it is necessary to make sure everyone who wants a turn gets it, to guide reflective listening in the review phase, or to keep the interaction

positive. Child leadership training may be begun at this time and even expanded after the training stage. The procedures to follow for instituting child leadership appear on pages 20 to 25.

REVIEWING:

Once or twice during the session, review what has thus far been shared by each child who has spoken by asking the children, *"Who will tell (Sally) the main part of what she said and what her feelings were."* As the children repeat what was said, ask them to personally address the one who said it, *"You told about . . . and you felt . . ."* Reward good listening with such praising commentary as, *"You listened well, (Pedro). You can remember what you hear too."* This is a good way to bring in students who have not spoken to the topic. Reviewing need not be done in the same order in which the children contributed, and may be held off altogether until the end of the session when everyone who wishes to speak has done so.

CULMINATING:

Cognitively review each session at its conclusion. Ask such questions as: *"Who thinks they can say why we talk about these things? Does it give you a good feeling to know more about other people? What was this all about? What did we learn (about each other)? How do you feel about it?"* Other questions pertaining to each activity are presented in this guide. Culminating questions set the stage for more willing participation in future sessions by letting the children understand that we are *"learning some important things."* Our purpose in culminating is to bring this affective experience together with its accompanying cognitive lessons.

If the questions that are suggested in the guide do not seem appropriate for what transpired in any given session, formulate one or two questions in your own mind and ask them, or ask the children if they have questions in mind to ask the group, which relate to what the session has been about.

Always accept the answers the children give to the questions, just as you do the feelings they tell about in the session, even if the answers are not *"correct"* to your way of thinking. Never ask a question and then answer it yourself, even if no one speaks up. The main purpose is to cause each child to think over the question, not answer it quickly and forget it. At times, however, very meaningful discussions will come about when the group becomes stimulated by one of the questions. This, of course, should be encouraged as time permits, and will probably occur more frequently as the children become more involved in the program.

It is hard for many of us to keep from answering the questions ourselves in one way or another, but it helps to remember that children generally *"turn-off"* to adults when we moralize to them, or tell them how to feel, or what to think. They will have their own feelings and come to their own conclusions, anyway. By using the program, we are trying to bring about a safe environment in which children reach rational conclusions *that are their own*. They will, therefore, be far more committed to these conclusions, than to ideas we try to implant in them. For this reason, we must respect the rate at which the children are able to do this.

ANNOUNCING TOMORROW'S TOPIC:

Before the children leave the circle, tell them what topic you have in mind for the next day so that they will be able to think about it. A pocket chart, showing the sequence of topics to be discussed, may be posed on a bulletin board in the classroom.

THE TWO MOST IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER:

No matter what happens in a circle session, without the following two elements, it is really not a Human Development circle session:

1. Everyone gets a turn who wants one.
2. Everyone who takes a turn gets listened to.

What does it mean to get a turn? Imagine a pie divided into as many pieces as there are people in the circle. Telling the children that everyone will get a turn, whether they want to take it or not is like telling them that each one will get a piece of pie. Some may not want their piece today, but they know it's there to take if and when they want it. As the leader, you are there to protect this right. Thus, getting a turn not only means a chance to talk, but also an assurance to the child that he/she has "space" that no one else will violate.

When the children take their turns, they will be listened to. There will be no attempt by anyone to manipulate what they are offering. That is, they will not be probed, interrupted, interpreted, analyzed, put-down, joked-at, advised, preached-to, and so on. To "listen to" in the Human Development Program is to respectfully focus attention on the speaker and to let him/her know that you heard what he/she said. This is done in the review phase of each circle session. For this reason, each session is *not complete* without a review of what each person who spoke to the topic said.

The lowest risk method for giving someone the feeling that you heard what they said seems to be to "feed-back", "reflect", "parrot" or "mirror" *the speaker's own words*. By repeating back certain words that the speaker used that appear to have special meaning to him/her, the speaker *knows* that he/she was listened to. An alternate method for reflecting is to use paraphrasing, (repeating back synonymous words) in which the listener uses his/her own words to convey to the speaker what he/she thought the speaker was saying. As you model these skills in the circle sessions, the children will learn them through imitation.

The only way that a circle session can be evaluated is by these two criteria. Thus, if only one or two students chose to speak, and were listened to, by way of a review, even if they didn't say very "deep" or "meaningful" things, the circle can be considered a success.

Remember also that everyone who leads circle sessions has his/her own personal style. There is no one perfect way to do it. You will develop your own style as you work with the program. Think of yourself as a novice for the first year. Human Development circle sessions are challenging. They require energy and practice but like almost everything that takes hard work, they bring great rewards.

A GUIDE FOR THE LEADER FOR ANALYZING THE SESSION

It is sometimes very difficult to evaluate just what has happened in a session. How well did it go? Were the needs of the group met? Are there things I could do better?

If I am to be open and honest with others, first I must be open and honest with myself. This is a slow, never ending process, which grows and blossoms with tender care. It takes courage and patience but the rewards of knowing are worth it.

The first place to search for answers is within yourself. At the end of a session a careful analysis of your feelings may reveal some answers as to why some things work and why some other things don't. People are open as long as they feel safe. Carefully give thought to each item on this list:

1. Did everyone have a turn?
2. Was someone especially pleased?
3. Were moments of silence comfortable?
4. Were some members excited about the next meeting?
5. Is the pressure on my body inward, or outward, as I think about the session?
6. Did I really want to be with the group?
7. Did I put someone down today?
8. Was I put down today? What did I do?
9. Did I blame someone today?
10. Which person do I like best?
 - a. Describe this person to yourself.
 - b. What do I like best about him/her? Why?
 - c. Who else do I know like him/her?
 - d. Who was the first person I ever knew like that?
 - e. What do I want this person to do?
 - f. What is this person afraid of?
 - g. What would I do if I had those fears?
11. What am I afraid of?
12. Who is the first to criticize me?
13. Who in the group am I the most pleased with?
14. If I get angry, who would like it?
15. Who would be the target?
16. If I were giving out love, who would get the first share?
17. Where would I run out?
18. Who would I like to share a good session with?
19. What needs of mine were met in the group?
20. Were the needs met by the group the same as mine?
21. Did I hold back anger? Why?

22. If I had become angry, what would have happened?
23. Who would criticize me for getting angry?
24. Did I hold back a good feeling?
25. Does someone get embarrassed if I share good feelings? Who?
26. Something nice that I could say to each member of the group is . . .
27. Something nice that I could say to myself is . . .
28. A way that I could take what I don't like about someone and change it into a positive statement is . . .
 - a. Someone who talks too much: *"James, you express yourself very freely."*
 - b. Someone who is always negative: *"Carol, you often see things differently."*
(I can temper these with love and use them in the next session, or whenever appropriate.)
29. If someone asked me to sit in a group so that they could know me better, would I like that?
30. If someone accepts me and is interested in me, how do I feel?
31. If someone listens to what I am saying and asks questions, how does that make me feel?
32. If someone tries to make a safe place for me to be myself, how do I feel toward them?
33. Who in the group is the most different from me?
34. Do I want them to be like me?
35. What about them do I like?

They love you! They can't say it either.

ARTICULATION OF THE PROGRAM IN THE SELF-CONTAINED SIXTH GRADE CLASSROOM

Group Size and Composition, Time, Place, Stages for Gradual Involvement of Everyone, and Child Leadership

In the ten years in which I have been doing circle sessions with children and talking to teachers about their circle sessions, it has become evident to me that there is no one correct way to carry out the Human Development Program in the classroom or in any other setting. In fact, within a few guidelines relating to the environment, time, space, and number of group members, etc., one might say that *the correct way is any way that works* for any particular teacher (or leader) and class. By way of offering guidelines, strategies that have worked for a number of teachers will be presented. The major things that need to be considered are:

GROUP SIZE AND COMPOSITION:

Since time is taken to focus on the feelings of each participant who wishes to speak in the session, and to allow the group members to listen reflectively to each other, the group will need to be kept relatively small. I have generally seen that in the sixth grade any number from eight to twelve usually works out best. When the number reaches thirteen or more it is difficult to simultaneously give everyone enough time to express him/herself and to keep the interest of the children who are not taking their turn. At this age children are generally capable of somewhat extensive verbalization — a factor which should be taken advantage of as much as possible and not stifled because of time constraints.

Each group should be as heterogeneous as possible with respect to sex, ability, and the racial and ethnic backgrounds of the children. Sometimes there will be a group in which all of the children are particularly reticent. In this rare case, bring in an expressive child who will spark the others to verbalization. Sometimes, for practical reasons, it is necessary to change the membership of a group. Once it is established, it should remain as stable as possible, however.

TIME AND SPACE:

Most circle sessions last approximately 20 to 30 minutes in the sixth grade. At first interest may abate before 20 minutes are up and you may decide to end these sessions sooner, but usually the problem seems to be carrying out all the steps within a 20-30 minute time period. For those classes with more relaxed schedules some sessions have lasted 45 minutes or more, with high interest. Generally speaking, as the children experience the sessions they become comfortable and highly motivated to express themselves, to listen reflectively and to discuss the meaning of each session.

I make few recommendations to leaders of circle sessions regarding times for conducting the sessions, but I will mention some of the times that classroom teachers have the sessions that are satisfactory for them. Often the circle is conducted in the morning as an initial activity, thereby setting a positive tone in the classroom for the rest of the day. Other teachers prefer to hold the session at the end of the school day as a kind of "coming together" before going home. Still others conduct their circles during the day at feasible times. Once a time is established, it should remain as stable as possible so that the children will be able to know that it is something that they can depend on.

With respect to scheduling many teachers have carried out the program as a part of their social studies curriculum and/or language program. The process involved in the circle session has been seen by many to be "social studies in perhaps its purest form". And the fact that it is a language program, although it is much more, is apparent. Human Development Program circle sessions are a

critical component in numerous Bilingual/Bicultural programs throughout the U.S.A. and in other countries due to the compatible goals of Bilingual Education and the Human Development Program.

Since all classrooms, and other settings, vary greatly in the amount of space available, I make few recommendations along these lines. Generally, a circle session may be carried out wherever there is room and few, or preferably no, distractions. (A discussion ensues on the next page regarding the achievement of these conditions.) Most teachers seem to prefer having the children sit on chairs, rather than the floor, since they seem to be less apt to invade one another's space while seated in chairs. However, many groups do sit on the floor and some teachers (and/or leaders) conduct sessions with the children out-of-doors with everyone seated in a quiet, secluded grassy area.

HOW OFTEN SHOULD THE SESSIONS BE HELD?

THE PROGRAM SHOULD BE CARRIED OUT DAILY, OR AS CLOSE TO THAT IDEAL AS POSSIBLE, IN ORDER FOR THE MOST BENEFITS TO OCCUR. The more often children are exposed to the circle session process and to the issues being discussed, the better. This is particularly true, due to the developmental nature of the topics which build understanding in the children in a sequential manner.

Such realities as large classes, overcrowded schedules, and other pressures facing you may make this difficult, especially at first. For those teachers in typical classrooms with 28-48 children who recognize the importance of including an affective educational program, such as the Human Development Program, in the curriculum, there are ways to do circle sessions on a daily basis. Some plans that have been used successfully by many teachers for involving as many children as possible are described subsequently.

At first glance, the problem of involving everyone in a small group discussion with structured guidelines, even when you have an aide may seem very formidable. It is a challenging task and at the outset it should be stressed that you initiate the program in ways that are the most workable *for you*. I have seen that when teachers have kept from overcommitting themselves to a plan which is too complex in the beginning, the program evolves effectively, appropriately involving all of the children in a smooth fashion.

STRATEGIES FOR THE INVOLVEMENT OF EVERYONE:

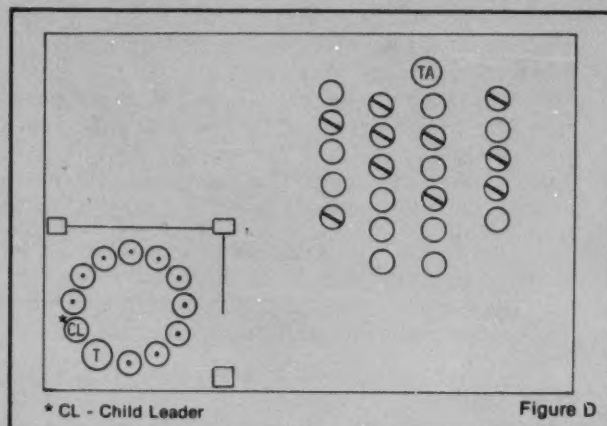
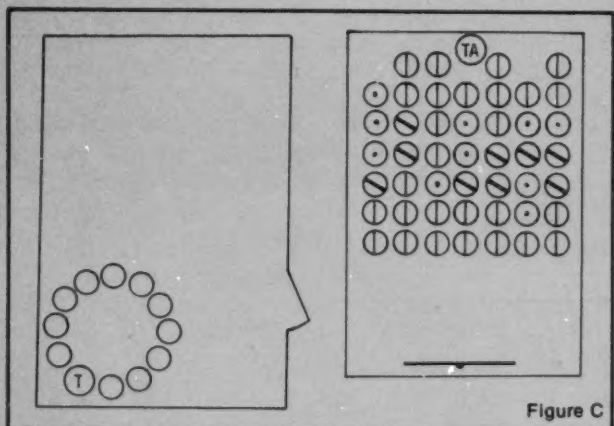
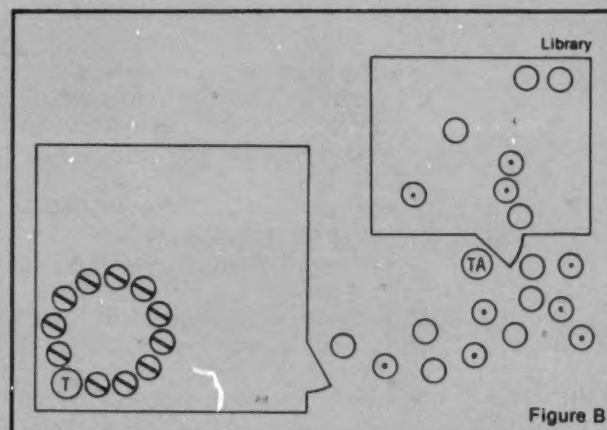
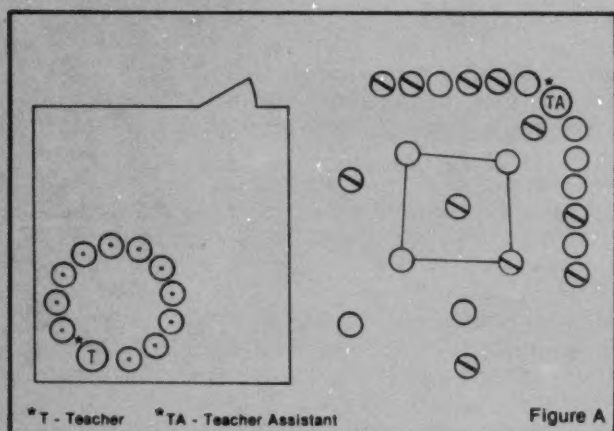
A number of methods have been used by teachers for involving every child in the class in the Human Development Program. What works well for one teacher and class does not always work for another. For this reason, three main strategies that have been followed successfully by a number of teachers are described as follows:

I. A Plan For Starting Three (Or Four) Groups Inside Of Two Weeks:

Start the year (you may want to wait a week or two after school starts to begin circles, in order to get to know each child at least in part) by arranging for each child to experience being a member of a circle session in a setting in which there are no disturbances. This will mean arranging with another staff member to take the two-thirds (or more) of your class, with whom you are not working, out and away from the classroom for those 20-30 minutes. Choose a group of ten to twelve children with whom you feel comfortable, and start with an early awareness topic. Go over the ground rules with them and then conduct the circle session in your quiet room with those few. (Figure A.) The next day, take a second group, (Figure B), and the third day, a third group, (Figure C), so that every child gets to experience the circle under "ideal conditions". (If your enrollment exceeds 36, form four groups.) The other children may have been sent to the library, to the coach, out for P. E. with another teacher, or aide, to view a film with another class, etc. Actually, it would be better if you could go through another round of circles this way, or even a third round, so that inside of two weeks or so, every child in your class has experienced two or three quiet sessions.

Finally, when all of the class is together again, initiate a discussion about the circle sessions ("Did you like sitting in the circle and talking as we did? Would you like to continue to have circles?") Go into a teacher-pupil planning session about the fact that from now on the entire class will be

present during the circle times. Help the children to draw up a list of guidelines regarding their behavior when they are not in the circle. Since each child now knows what the sessions entail, and feels an investment in the activity, he/she will be ready to add his/her part and to follow through. If not, these children can be reminded of class decisions.



If two adults who wish to conduct circle sessions are present, such as yourself and an aide, two circles may be conducted simultaneously involving twice as many children in the class. This is an excellent plan if it can be carried out because the children will generally get more exposure to the program. If you are limited by having a crowded schedule, and no adult assistance, meet with a different group each day. If at all possible, however, meet with each group everyday.

At this point, the following question is usually asked: **"What do I do with the rest of my class, while I am meeting with one group and the others are in the classroom?"** There are a number of different kinds of arrangements that can be made for the children who are not participating in the circle session. Some ideas for keeping everyone involved effectively and minimizing distractions are described as follows:

- If possible, arrange the room to insure privacy.* This may involve placing chairs or carpeting in a corner for the circle sessions, away from other work areas. You may construct dividers from existing furniture such as bookshelves or screens, or simply arrange chairs and tables in such a way that the circle area is removed from distracting elements. (Figure D.)
- Make use of aides or fellow teachers.* Aides can conduct a lesson with, or facilitate, the rest of the class while you are in the circle with your group. If you do not have an aide

assigned to you, think about making use in this regard of auxiliary staff, volunteer parents, or junior and senior high schoolers who may have chosen to work in a nearby elementary school as an elective in their course programs. (Figure D.)

- c. *When possible, have children work together*, in quiet pairs or small task-oriented groups. Make sure that the rule of quietness is understood and observed.
- d. *Utilize student aides or leaders*. If the seatwork activity is in a content area, assign children who show ability in that area to be "consultants" to assist the others. In delegating such tasks, however, as always, be aware of giving too much authority, thus making a child a "stoolie".
- e. *Give plenty to do*. List activities on the board, or make materials for quiet individual activities available, so that children cannot "run out of things to do" and yield to the temptation to consult you or begin to bother others.
- f. *Make the activity of non-circle youngsters fun*. Sometimes, of course, this is not possible, and you will have to assign seatwork in math or another content area. But if you can involve the rest of the class in something meaningful to them in terms of their own concerns, they will probably be less likely to interrupt the circle.

Some suggestions for "involving" kinds of activities for children who are not participating in the circle session follow. You will find that many of them make use of the affective domain, so that what children in the activity group are being asked to do is not really significantly different from those in the circles, except that theirs are, for the most part, quiet non-verbal kinds of involvement. Also, they tend to draw largely on the children's creative potential.

The "ongoing project" idea is a good one to use — involving children in something begun previously, which they can simply go to and take up when it is time — requiring little or no introduction on your part. In these cases, structuring student supervision along the idea of "person in charge", "group leader", or "consultant" is wise.

Use Circle Session topics from this Activity Guide. Choose a topic from the guide for the children to illustrate. "My favorite place" for example, may be illustrated in a great number of ways, such as cut or torn paper, collage, paints, crayons, clay and pop-up pictures (drawing objects on flat paper, coloring, then cutting along the tops and bending them up to be three-dimensional).

A poem, paragraph, or story may be composed by the children about "How they like to spend their free time", for example, or about another topic. (Children could compose poems or skitscripts — later to be acted out in front of the class — on cue, such as "A Time When We Communicated Without Words".)

"Games". Teachers for years have particularly appreciated the game "Seven-Up" because of its nature as a quiet, structured, self-contained activity that involves children. There are others. One such is a non-verbal guessing game that employs creative-dramatics. List on the board, or ditto off, some ten or twenty "situation-comedy" skits. These might include the following: a scuba diver whose tanks have been filled with laughing-gas, a June-bug in a henhouse, a little child who has dropped his/her ice-cream cone on the beach and still wants to eat it, a person trapped between floors in a self-service elevator, a dog that cannot scratch an itch, etc. With a child in charge to direct the activity, one person volunteers to come up in front and act out one of the situations. After watching for awhile, the audience raises hands to guess which one of the skits he/she is performing. To simplify the activity, the children may simply act out an animal, a career, some object, or other.

Journals. During the time others are in the circle, the children may make entries in a private (or share-with-teacher-only) journal. Each child keeps his/her own. This may become (according to your wishes) an entirely private diary, a "writing exercise", a written communications systems with feedback between teacher and child, or other. Do not "correct" this work in the usual sense, but if it is something you will read, be sure to respond to the entries where appropriate with your own written thoughts.

Other activities in the affective domain are described at the end of each unit in this guide.

As time goes by, begin Child Leadership Training (described on pages 20 to 25) in each group, (Figure D) allowing children who volunteer the opportunity to lead the session as you sit beside him/her as leader trainer. In time, when all of the children have been trained, the groups may meet at staggered times during the day, or they may meet simultaneously in different parts of the room, while you circulate. (Figure E.) Be sure to reinforce the importance of the ground rules at this point.

Before the groups meet call the child leaders, who have volunteered to conduct the circles for the day, together to briefly remind them of the topic and to discuss how to proceed. Before the sessions begin, make sure that everyone remembers the ground rules and understands the topic. Be sure to let all of the children know that you have complete faith and trust in their ability to interact in a circle session without your full-time presence. You may decide to sit in on all three (or four) groups for a short period of time, or take part in a complete session being held by one group, alternating groups daily. (If available, use a tape recorder to record the sessions of the groups that you do not attend. Alternate the recorder from group to group on different days and allow the children to listen to the replays of their sessions, as time allows.) At times you may offer to lead a particular activity for a particular group if they seem to be bogging down. (Your leadership is likely to remind them of some things they may have temporarily forgotten.) Before the end of the session, write one or two culminating questions pertaining to the meaning of the activity on the board, and/or encourage them to ask their own questions to each other. Be sure to announce to the groups how much time they will have for these discussions.

Other approaches, such as dividing the groups into smaller groups and forming dyads, can also be carried out at this time. (See "Child Leadership, Expanded", pages 23 to 25.)

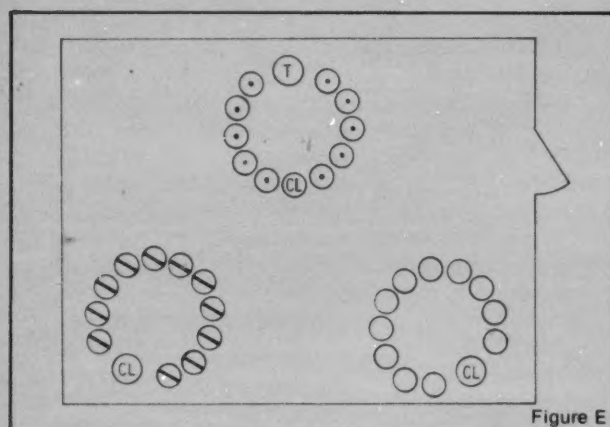


Figure E

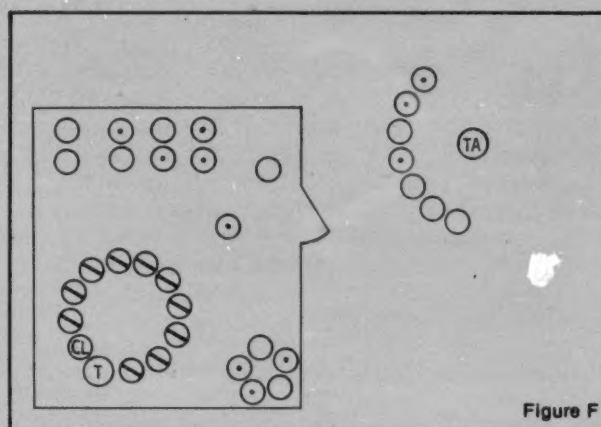


Figure F

II. A Plan For More Gradual Involvement Of Everyone:

Stage 1 — One Group. Begin by telling the class about the program. Describe briefly how it works, what the purposes of the program are, and what the ground rules are. Then select a small number of children (six to ten) to become members of the first group. This number may be increased slowly until about a third of the class, but not more than 12, are included. The rest of the class may be informed that at a later time they will be included in their own circles. (Plan I includes information related to activities for the rest of the class. See page 16.) Conduct sessions daily with group one exclusively, and when they seem ready, begin to train them to become leaders of their own sessions. (Figure F.) Continue in this way until all of the children in the group have been trained to lead the session themselves so that they may meet independently while you begin working with the next group.

At some point during the implementation of the stages in this plan, you may find it helpful to make a pocket chart to be posted on a bulletin board in the classroom, telling such things as group membership, topics to be discussed on certain dates and who will lead each topic, etc.

One of the biggest concerns teachers have who follow this plan is deciding who shall be in the first group. It is generally worked out in a variety of ways. Some teachers choose the first group on a purely random basis, making sure, however, to make it as heterogeneous as possible with respect to

the sex, and racial and ethnic backgrounds of the children. In this way, you are being very careful to be as fair as possible. Others decide to tackle the matter of discipline problems in the classroom "head-on" by bringing those children into the first group who are the least well-controlled in the class. By strongly stressing and enforcing the ground rules and allowing the benefits of each session to accrue, these children in time have appeared to improve in a number of ways in some classes. Many teachers, however, going on the theory that the program should be initiated in as workable a fashion as possible *for them*, have carefully chosen children who have indicated high interest, a commitment to behave in the session according to the ground rules and who have demonstrated self-control in the class, in general. (Again, heterogeneity is an important consideration.)

Another concern of teachers at this point is how to evaluate the first sessions. There may be some degree of confusion in the children as they begin to experience this different kind of learning situation. They may be self-conscious and easily distracted at times, losing some interest in the topic and in the process. Keep this in mind as you evaluate these sessions. At a certain point, all of this changes, however, sometimes very dramatically. The children become interested in what's being said and comfortable in the group situation. The process becomes meaningful to them personally and a feeling of cohesiveness develops in the group. Some reach this point inside of a week or two and others may take as long as a couple of months.

This interim period is often discouraging to teachers. Remember that the group will "gel" at some time. It usually doesn't happen right at first, but later there can be great enjoyment and satisfaction in being involved in this kind of communication process and in getting to know each child. Time and again teachers have reported that it is worthwhile to spend the energy that is required at first because it is repaid many times over in many ways.

Stage 2 — Adding Another Group. Follow the same format as was followed for group one, choosing another small group of six to ten children and adding more children gradually until another third of the class, but not more than 12, are included. If time does not permit you to meet with both groups, group one may meet independently in another part of the classroom, while you meet with group two. (Figure G.) Group one may be led by a different child each day. When group two is ready, begin child-leadership training and continue to work with the children until all are capable of leading the session. Then they may meet independently as group one has been doing.

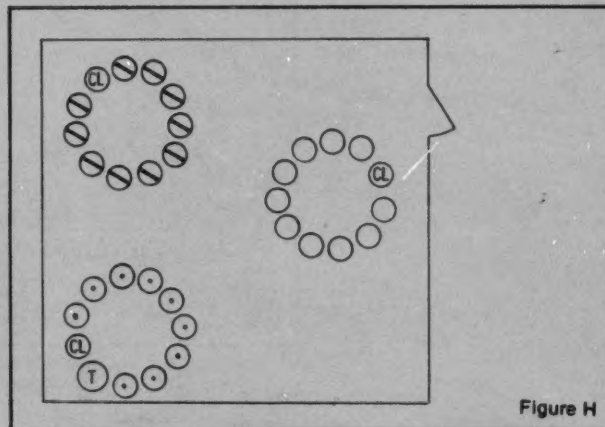
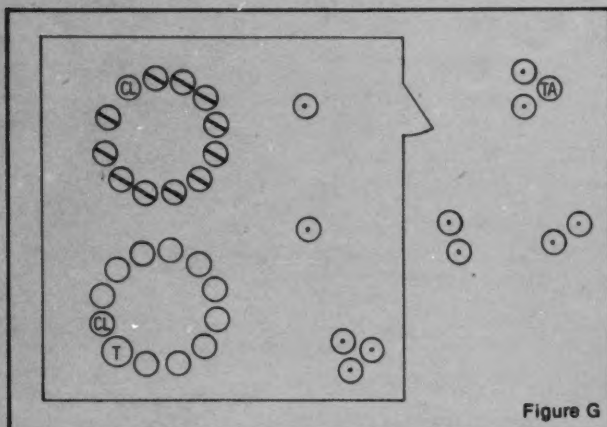
Selecting the children for group two may be done on any basis that is appropriate for you and the class. Teachers often choose those children who show interest in what group one is doing. If groups one and two are meeting at the same time, occasionally do not hold group two's session, so that you may meet with group one again to re-establish contact and to answer questions that they may have about circle session procedures.

Stage 3 — Adding a Third Group. Repeat the procedure already established for forming groups one and two with the remaining third of the class. While you are initiating the program with this group of children and training them to lead the sessions, groups one and two may meet independently with child leaders. (Figure H.) Again, at times, do not hold group three's session now and then so that you may meet with groups one and two.

(Stage 4 — Adding a Fourth Group. This stage is undertaken if your class enrollment exceeds 36. Since the circle functions best when no more than 12 children participate at one time, four groups should be set up if this is the case, dividing the class into fourths, instead of thirds. Proceed with this group, as with the others, until the members of group four are also able to lead their own sessions. Any child who approaches you indicating he/she does not want to participate in the program should not be forced to do so.)

After all three (or four) groups are able to meet independently they may meet at staggered times during the day, or simultaneously. If you arrange for them to meet simultaneously, you may circulate and sit in on the circles, as you are needed. (Figure E.) If all the groups have had the same topic, write the culminating questions on the board. If they have been discussing different topics, which is likely if this plan is followed, you may give each leader a copy of the questions from this guide. Write the questions for each group on the board, visit each group briefly to ask them the questions, or encourage the children to think of their own culminating questions. In many cases, the child-leaders will be able to adequately handle this phase as well as the rest of the responsibilities of leading the session.

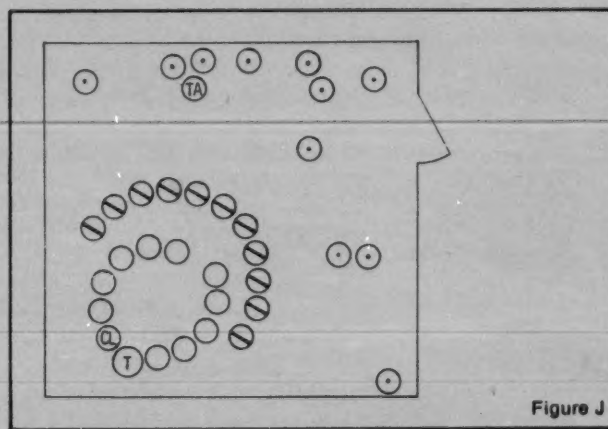
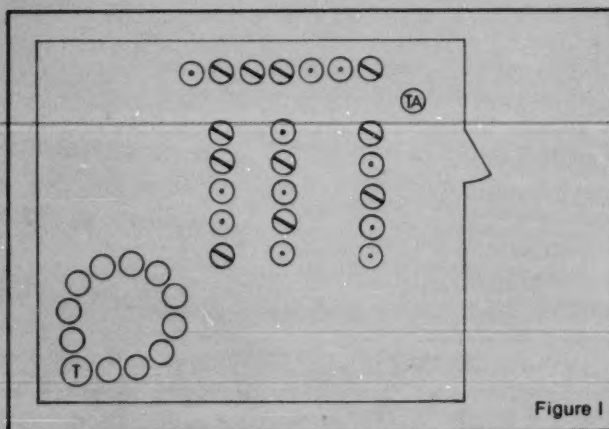
When the class has arrived at this stage and the program is working smoothly, you may begin some of the variations which are described in "Child Leadership, Expanded", pages 23 to 25.

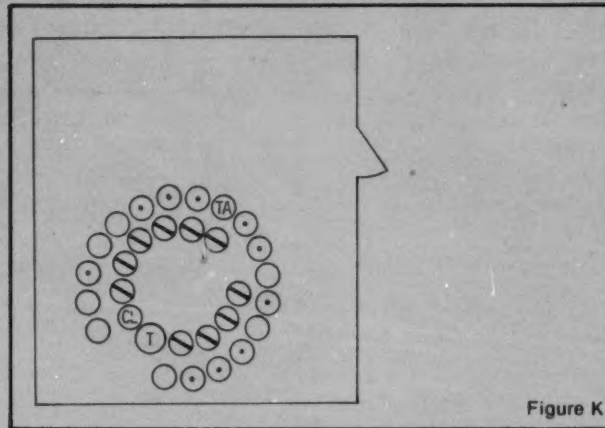


III. A Plan For Gradually Getting Everyone Together At Once:

In the past we have suggested that teachers begin with one group (Figure I), and later add another to listen and observe as an outer circle. (Figure J.) These two groups then begin to alternate being in the inner circle, which responds verbally to the topic. Both groups may have a chance to be in the inner circle each day, while the other sits in the outer circle, if time permits, or meet in the inner circle every other day. Later a third group (and possibly a fourth) may be added to this alternating cycle. (Figure K.) The end-product of this arrangement is the involvement of everyone in the class in separate groups, which vary in number from 8 to 12 children, but which all meet together at the same time. While one group is involved in the discussion in the inner circle, the other two (or three) groups listen and observe as members of the outer circle.

If you follow this plan, place an empty chair in the inner circle (or designate a vacant spot if everyone is seated on the floor or ground) for any child in the outer circle to come to if he/she wishes very much to verbally participate. After these children have had the opportunity to speak to the topic they return to their place in the outer circle. During the review, ask someone to reflect to these children what they said too. The children in the outer circle are also invited to participate in the general review and culmination for each session. Again, Child Leadership Training is begun when the children are ready — this time in the physical framework of the inner and outer circles.





This may be a workable plan for your class to follow if the ground rules are very carefully adhered to. The main advantage is that everyone is enabled to become involved with each topic. When the child is in the inner circle, he/she has the opportunity to deal with it verbally, and when he/she is in the outer circle, he/she is in a position to listen and think about the subject of discussion. In this way, "gaps" are less likely to occur for these children, than, for example, for children who experience a session every other, or every third day. They are involved in some way every day.

The main disadvantage to this procedure (that may not exist for your class) is that it can be cumbersome. Both physical space and the ability of the children in the outer circle to remain quiet and attentive enough while not being involved verbally, may be lacking. A number of teachers have reported that it is difficult to conduct sessions in which they are attempting to carry out warm, close communication and train a child-leader, while as many as 25 children are seated just beyond the circle as sometimes restless observers.

CHILD LEADERSHIP TRAINING

Why is Child Leadership Important?

A basic assumption of the Human Development Program is that every human being (barring those having considerable sub-normal intelligence) has leadership potential and that the optimum time for energizing this ability is in childhood. I have seen in countless classrooms that the children are capable of effectively leading their own circle sessions. I have also noted that their ability to lead is likely to transfer to other school and community functions following the practice they have gained. Often, if the child is not given a chance to experience successful leadership practice during childhood, the chance is missed and later being responsible for a group effort or "getting up in front of people" is likely to be a frightening experience. For this reason, child leadership has become an important component of the Human Development Program. Leadership in the accepting atmosphere of the circle session is a good place to begin this important function. Then, as they grow and mature, children may *choose* to lead in certain situations and follow in others. The choice will be theirs because they will know that they have led successfully in the past.

The Teacher's Role As Leader Trainer:

After the group you are working with has become comfortable with each other and the procedure, and have participated in enough sessions so that they are familiar with the format, suggest to them that they begin to think about **volunteering** to lead the next session after you have led one more. The next day, as you begin to lead the next session, remind them to watch you closely to see what steps you go through in leading it. At the end of that session, after the culmination,

ask the children to tell you what the main things were that you did. They should be able to delineate the following steps:

The Leader —

1. Reminds the group of the topic and clarifies what it is about,
2. Gives each person a turn who wants one and asks each participant about his/her feelings, if they do not tell about them,
3. Conducts a review of what each person said, and
4. Conducts a culmination focusing on the major outcomes of importance of the session.

Then ask the children if anyone would like to volunteer to lead tomorrow's session. If no one volunteers accept this outcome and wait a week or two before trying again. If several volunteer, choose a child who you think is very likely to succeed. Then tell the group the topic you have in mind for tomorrow's session. Be sure to emphasize to the children that every child has leadership potential and that everyone can lead. All that is required is a little bit of courage and a lot of practice. Be as personal as possible when you make these remarks to the group. Convey to the children the feeling that you strongly believe in them.

The next day, remind the group of who the child leader will be. Tell them that you will be the trainer and will speak about the process when necessary, but that you are turning the session over to the child and your role will now become that of participant, like the other circle members. Go over the steps involved in the leadership of the circle again and tell the child leader that you will again become the leader of the circle when it is time for the culmination. (Later, as the children become experienced in the child leadership role, they are also able, in many cases, to handle the culmination too.)

Before turning the session over to the child leader add one more thing — a *new ground rule*, which states that the children who are participating are expected to fully respect the leadership position of the child leader. If they disagree with the child leader's procedure, or are aware of what he/she should do next when the child leader may have forgotten, they are not to say anything at that time unless they are asked to by the child leader. When people are learning a new skill, such as how to lead a circle session, it can be very disconcerting to have a number of other people constantly reminding them of what they are supposed to do next. For this reason, the child leader should not be heckled in any way. (Time will come at the end of the session for the group to give feedback to the child leader about his/her performance.)

Other things to review as a group before each session are specific questions the child leader might ask and how to word them, and any other things that relate to the specific topic for discussion that the child leader should think about ahead of time. (It might be a good idea to read and discuss the description of the activity in this guide with the child leader prior to the session.)

Now allow the child leader to proceed, interjecting statements yourself about the procedure, *only when absolutely necessary*. Be sure to take your turn and become involved in the review, however, like the other circle members. At times you may be able to help the child leader by tactfully dealing with children who might, in one way or another, interrupt or distract the group.

Following the review of what each person who spoke to the topic said, thank the child leader. Then culminate the session by asking the children what conclusions they have come to as a result of what transpired in the session and/or ask the child leader, and then the group in general, to ask culminating questions that they might have in mind, as time permits.

Before ending the session, conduct a brief critique of the leadership by asking the children: "*Who would like to tell (the child leader) what you liked about the way he/she conducted the session?*" Let the child leader call on each child who has a comment. Then ask the children: "*Who has a suggestion for him/her that might help him/her to do an even better job next time?*" **Allow no more than one or two comments** and then thank the child leader again for volunteering and doing such a good job.

At this point tell the children the topic you have in mind for tomorrow's session and ask for a volunteer to lead it. Remember that children should not lead the group until you are sure that it will be a successful experience for them. Call on children of both sexes and all racial and ethnic groups represented to have equal turns at leading the session.

Continue to have the children in the group with which you are working function as child leaders until all of them are competent enough so that the group may then meet independently while you meet with another group, as Plans I and II, described above, suggest. Many children will need only to lead once with you present and others may prefer to have you present as they practice two or more times before they feel ready to lead the group when it is meeting independently.

As you begin child leadership, discuss the following points with the children, perhaps presenting a different one each day:

While some children have more leadership potential than others, every child can be leader and can do a competent job, even though he/she may never become an expert. Perfection is not expected.

While getting attention, recognition, and experience, the leader's principle responsibility is to give each and every child the chance to express him/herself as fully and as honestly as possible. The leader is not an indoctrinator, but rather a facilitator of growth-inducing expressions. The leader is sensitive to the feelings of the child who is expressing him/herself and does not get sidetracked by the content which is less important.

The effective leader not only remembers the format and conducts the session, but also listens carefully to what is being said so that he/she is enabled to ask pertinent questions, such as, "How did Alice say she felt when she takes her German Shepherd for a walk?"

In order to urge the children during the review to directly tell the person who spoke what they said, the effective leader asks, "Who will tell Bob what you heard him say?" In this way, the child who responds will tell Bob, "You said that . . . and you felt . . .," rather than "He told . . . and he felt . . ."

The effective leader sees to it that the focal subject of the day's activities is adhered to and does not permit digressions that cannot easily soon return to the central concept.

The leader is a patient listener, and never hurries a child along. He/she is willing to listen and does so in a neutral and tolerant fashion. The only things a good leader does, not tolerate are destructive comments and acting out. The good leader evokes to a maximum extent the expression of leadership abilities on the part of as many other members of the group as is feasible, while still maintaining the focus on the basic subject of the day.

The leader is fair and kind, but firm about encouraging good listening. The leader only asks enough questions of any given child to encourage that child to give maximum expression to his/her thoughts and feelings. A good leader does not "put words into a child's mouth", or make any critical comment regarding whether or not he/she would react the same way. The leader does not make any approving or disapproving statements about what the child has reported.

The good leader is respectful at all times of all of the children and is appreciative of the opportunity to have the responsibility of being the leader. Further, the good leader is appreciative of the positive statements and the constructive criticisms that are given to him/her at the end of the session.

The more often children serve in leadership capacities, the greater becomes their awareness, self-confidence, and comprehension of social interaction. Children who are leading are practicing at being responsible and considerate people. The more they practice in a framework that never permits the abuse of power, which leads to destructive social activities, the more responsible they will become. Leadership training seen in the light of the above is really nothing more than the building of good character.

As soon as each child in the group has been trained to lead the session, the group may meet independently, while you work with another group if you are not able to meet with each group, each day, due to time constraints. Before these independent groups begin, meet briefly with the child-leaders to discuss the topics and ways to proceed in the session. Discuss with them specific questions to ask during the participation phase, and for the culmination, possibly reading the description of the activity in this guide with them. As the group begins, make sure everyone understands the topic in each circle session. Then start the session that you will be leading in another area in the classroom.

Child Leadership Expanded

Smaller Circles . . .

In order to give more children more opportunities to lead the circle sessions and the participants a longer time for self expression, the three (or in some cases four) groups (shown in Figures E, H, and K) may be divided into six (or eight) smaller groups. (Figure L.) These groups may have from 3 to 6 members with child-leaders leading them. Before the groups begin be sure that everyone understands the topic and what is expected. As before, circulate from group to group. When a group desires your leadership, be sure to comply. As the sessions start, let the children know when to start their reviews and summaries. Again, write the culminating questions on the board, if all of the groups are discussing the same topic. (At this point, it would probably be much more workable not to have the groups discussing different ones.) Or, urge the child leaders to ask their own culminating questions, or call on the children for their questions.

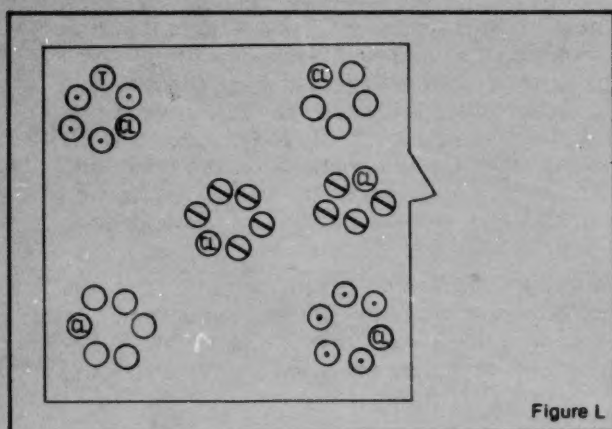


Figure L

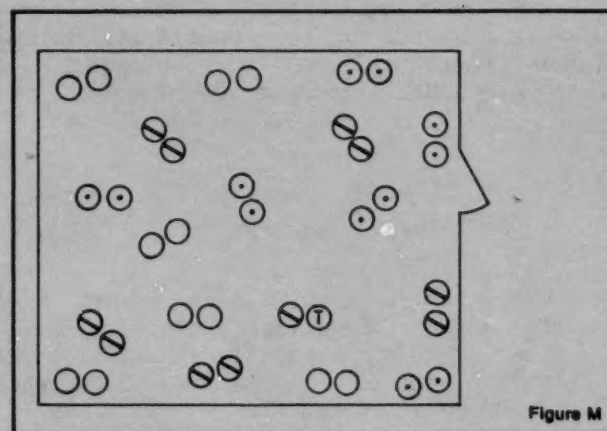


Figure M

Dyads . . .

Another variation which may be used interchangeably is to form dyads in which the children may be allowed to choose someone in their group (with whom they are familiar and comfortable) for discussion of the topic. (Figure M.)

There is a specific format for the dyads, which should be carefully explained to the children in the beginning and at various times throughout the rest of the school year when this variation is used. Basically, the time is divided so that each child has a turn to speak while the other child listens. Then they switch, so that the listener now becomes the speaker and vice-versa. This does not mean that the listener should not speak at all, although this may be very appropriate in many cases. Rather, the listener should attempt to really hear what the speaker is saying and become aware of how the speaker is feeling, or felt, about what he/she is telling about. The listener may make remarks which indicate that he/she is listening and understands, such as, "You felt good when that happened," or "That must have been scary," but he/she should never interpret, "Your problem seems to be . . ."; advise, "Here's what you should do about that . . ."; moralize, "It's not nice to . . ."; or interrupt in any way. If the speaker gets bogged down, the listener may ask, "Tell me more

about . . . Because this kind of listening takes very definite skills, dyads should not be introduced until the children have had considerable practice at learning to listen and tune-in to each other's feelings in the circle sessions that have taken place prior to this time. The children are also more practiced at self-expression by this time.

During dyads, laughter, yawning and other forms of physical discharge are likely to occur. Remember that these are normal releases of tension and should be as acceptable as the feelings the children are discussing.

Dyads may take as little time as fifteen minutes and maybe even less at first. Begin by allowing the children to pair off, preferably with someone who is a member of their circle session group. (If the number of children is uneven, you may be the partner to the child who is without a peer.) (Figure M.) Then remind them of the topic and be sure that everyone understands it. Be sure also to tell them how much time they will have for each phase of the activity. (Sometimes children may utilize this time to tell about something else they feel the need to talk about and this should be acceptable.) Then ask them to decide who will take their turn to speak first (Person A), as the other child (Person B), listens. As soon as they are ready to begin, allow them to do so. If fifteen minutes have been planned for the activity, stop the children at the end of the first five minutes and tell them that it is time to switch. At the end of the second five minutes, in which the child who listened at first (Person B) has now had his/her turn to be the speaker and vice-versa, stop them again and ask them to take two minutes to tell each other the main things they heard each other say, *especially the feelings that were reported*. (Person B should reflect to Person A first, then Person A reflects to Person B.) At the end of this time, direct the attention of the children to the culminating questions on the board and give them two minutes to discuss them briefly. An automatic timer is very helpful for dyads (as well as circle sessions and other classroom activities) because it signals the end of time periods impartially and is therefore easily respected.

Two advantages to dyads are that maximum time for self-expression is provided in a relatively short time period and it may be the most effective way for some children to discuss some topics. A disadvantage may be that the "group feeling" is not present in this kind of one-to-one situation. For these reasons it is recommended that dyads be carried out interchangeably with circle sessions.

Leading Circle Sessions With Younger Children . . .

Another variation involving child-leadership of the circle sessions relates to leading sessions with younger children. Arrange with teachers in the kindergarten or primary grades for one or more of the children in your class to conduct circles with a small group of children in their classes. These children should be very proficient in circle session leadership and should be highly motivated to undertake this responsibility. This may be worked out on a one-time-only, or on a systematic, basis. It will be necessary for an adult to be on hand to supervise these sessions, being particularly sure that the younger children are cooperating with the child leaders by observing the ground rules. Before the child leaders undertake each session, help them select topics which will be appropriate for the groups they will be working with. Discuss with them before their sessions possible questions they could ask and how they would handle particular things that might occur.

In the foregoing, three systematic plans have been presented for carrying out the circle sessions. Child leadership, and some variations, have also been discussed. **GENERALLY, KEEP IN MIND THAT WHATEVER ARRANGEMENTS YOU FIND NECESSARY TO MAKE, SO THAT THE PROGRAM IS WORKABLE FOR YOU, ARE RIGHT. TEACHERS, GROUPS OF CHILDREN, PHYSICAL SETTINGS, AND MANY OTHER FACTORS DIFFER WIDELY. THESE RECOMMENDATIONS ARE OFFERED AS A GENERAL GUIDELINE. DO NOT FEEL BOUND TO FOLLOW THEM TO THE LETTER. YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF YOUR OWN SITUATION AND NEEDS WILL BE THE BEST GUIDE.**

PRELIMINARY ACTIVITIES RELATED TO COMMUNICATION THE "COMMUNICATION STOPPERS"

One of the most important elements in a successful circle session is that the participants observe and behave according to the ground rules. It is particularly critical that certain negative behaviors known as "communication stoppers"¹ be excluded from the sessions, especially when the Child Leadership Training and Child Leadership Expanded stages occur. In order to exclude or avoid certain behaviors it helps to know what they are in the first place. For this reason, the following preliminary activities are suggested to help children to (1) become consciously aware of behaviors that are not helpful in the circle sessions and in many other situations, and (2) to understand how these behaviors affect other people.

I am not saying that each "communication stopper" is inappropriate in every life situation. My intent in offering these preliminary experiences is to help the children to be more in control of their own behavior. If they are aware of how the "communication stoppers" function and how they affect human interaction, the children are more likely to be able to recognize these behaviors when they see them in themselves, and in others, and be in a position to *choose* alternate behaviors and responses if they *decide* to.

The activities to be described will focus on the following eight "communication stoppers":

Interrupting	Confronting
Probing	Advising
Judging	Dominating
Interpreting	Putting-down

Present each "communication stopper" to the class as a separate item to be focused upon through dramatization and total class discussion. You may conduct eight separate class activities, a single session focusing on each "communication stopper", or you may present two or three "communication stoppers" in succession during one time period. In each session prior to the open discussion of each "communication stopper" spark the children's interest by having two children read a script which demonstrates how the "communication stopper" in focus works. This dramatization will help the children to identify the particular "communication stopper" in focus and to understand how it operates. They will then define it. Following the formulation of each definition, present a demonstration, with the help of another child, illustrating positive communication skills. The following model describes a step-by-step procedural format for presenting and discussing each "communication stopper" in total class sessions:

¹ See *Parent Effectiveness Training* by Thomas Gordon, Ph.D., for an expanded view of non-facilitative communication behaviors, which he calls, "Twelve Roadblocks to Effective Communication," or "The Dirty Dozen."

Preparations . . .

Begin by selecting three children to assist you with the dramatization aspects for each "communication stopper" that you plan to present in the class session. Two of these children will be script readers for each "communication stopper" and the other will help you with the demonstration.

Give each script reader a copy of his/her script. (Appendix D provides two copies of each script for removal from this activity guide so that each script reader may have a copy.) Explain to the script readers that you would like for them to read the script loudly, slowly and clearly enough in front of the class so that everyone will be able to hear. Then allow them to practice reading the script together in some private place.

Explain to the other children (one for each "communication stopper" to be presented) that you would like for them to help the class learn about positive communication skills, by helping you do some demonstrations. Tell them that you would like for them to approach you at the front of the classroom one at a time and start talking to you about something they would like to tell you about (that they wouldn't mind having the whole class hear too). Tell them that you will give each one of them the signal during the class session which will tell them when to approach you and start talking. Explain that as they talk you will use as many positive communication skills with them that you can. Tell them that you know that this is a big challenge, but you would like for them to try to keep talking until you have stopped the demonstration. Be sure to express your appreciation to the children at this point and again in front of the class. Then ask them to decide in their own minds what they want to tell you in the demonstration.

Before the presentation write the heading, "communication stoppers" on the board with the names of the "communication stoppers" that will be presented in the session, underneath. Leave a space by each one for a class formulated definition to be filled in later.

The Class Presentation . . .

Begin by telling the class that we are going to be taking a very close look at some behaviors called "communication stoppers". Then read the name or names of the "communication stoppers" that will be presented in the session together.

Reading the script: Without any other preliminaries, ask the first script readers to come to the front of the class to read their script. Remind them to read loudly and clearly. Their script, which demonstrates interrupting follows:

I. Interrupting

Person 1: Guess what! I learned how to divide fractions today!

Person 2: I learned how to do that last week. The thing that's really hard is formulas.

1: Oh really. I was so happy when I finally learned how to . . .

2: Formulas are very hard, interesting though. Once you understand the formula you are working on it's fun. The most interesting formula for me is the way you find out the diameter of a circle.

1: Oh. I haven't gotten to formulas yet. When I learned to multiply fractions, I felt the same way, I . . .

2: Multiplying fractions is easy. I can teach you how.

1: I already know how. What was hard for me was understanding how to divide them. I just . . .

2: My big sister is taking trigonometry. If you think fractions are complicated, you should see her trigonometry book. There are more numbers and little symbols in there! It really looks hard.

1: I guess trigonometry is just as hard for her as fractions are to us. My cousin is . . .

2: Naw. Trigonometry isn't hard for her. She enjoys it. I'll tell her to help you with your fractions. She can teach you how to multiply and divide them.

1: But I already . . .

2: Hey, I have to go now. See you later.

As soon as the script readers have read their script (you may decide to have them read it twice), thank them for their help and allow them to return to their places in the class. Then ask the class, "What did (person 2) keep doing to (person 1)?" Allow them to answer, and then underline the word, "interrupting". As may be necessary, give other examples of how interrupting functions at this time. Then ask the following questions, which relate to this script:

1. How did (person 2) interrupt (person 1)?
2. Who was the one who wanted to communicate in the first place?
3. Who ended up saying the most?
4. How well did (person 2) understand what (person 1) was saying?
5. How do you think (person 1) probably felt when (person 2) kept interrupting?
6. How do you feel when someone keeps interrupting you?

Discuss as a class how frustrating it is to be interrupted. Help the children to realize, through discussion, that when they interrupt someone, the person who they interrupted probably feels just as frustrated as they do when it happens to them. Discuss also how futile it seems to try to continue a conversation when interruptions occur. Interrupting is probably the simplest, yet one of the most devastating ways, to stop communication.

Class formulated definition: When everyone who wishes to comment has done so, ask the children how they would define interrupting, without using the word itself in the definition. Listen to several ideas the children have and combine them, as needed, to arrive at one complete sentence that defines the behavior. Write the definition on the board next to the word, *interrupting*, as the children dictate their definition.

The demonstration: To illustrate an alternate mode of interacting that will not stop communication, ask the child you selected for the first demonstration to come to the front of the class to start a conversation with you. While the child talks, demonstrate as many positive communication skills as you can. Listen attentively and appreciatively, establish eye contact and demonstrate a receptive body posture toward the child. Occasionally, respond warmly to what the child is saying. When the child has completed his/her remarks, briefly repeat back to the child what you heard him/her saying. Then stop the demonstration. Ask the child (1) how he/she feels, and (2) whether or not he/she feels listened to. Finally, thank the child for helping you and allow him/her to leave the front of the class. Then ask the class to discuss what they observed. Give everyone who wants to respond a chance to do so.

After carrying out three or four of these demonstrations, each for a different "communication stopper" with children helping you, allow children to do each of the remaining ones, as you join the class as an observer. Choose different children for each demonstration.

OTHER POINTS TO SHARE WITH THE CLASS:

As we learn about the "communication stoppers" it might be tempting to point at someone and say, "You do that one all the time." This is something we should not do for two reasons. First of all, to do it is to use one of the "communication stoppers" called **confronting**. Secondly, the reason that we are learning about the "communication stoppers" is so that each person may be able to use more self-control. As the children learn about the "communication stoppers" they may decide in their own minds what to do with the information they have gained. Accusations will probably not help anyone to gain insights or to become motivated to control their own behavior.

Sometimes we know it when we are using "communication stoppers" but very often we don't. Now that we are all becoming more aware of what the "communication stoppers" are, and how they cause bad feelings in people, we will be able to use more self-control to keep ourselves from using them.

These behaviors are almost always inappropriate in a circle session, and are also not helpful in many other situations. We are not saying, however, that they are always inappropriate and should never be used in any situation.

We are looking at "communication stoppers" one at a time in these class sessions, but when they occur in our social interactions, they generally occur collectively. In other words, when people use "communication stoppers", they probably won't just interrupt, for example, but are likely to interpret, dominate or use any of the other "communication stoppers" in the same conversation.

There are other "communication stoppers" too, besides the eight that we are becoming aware of, many of which are non-verbal. Ask the class to think of others. As they are named, write them on the board and briefly discuss each one. Ask the children, "How do you feel when someone (laughs at, sneers at, ignores, etc.) you?"

Follow the format outlined above for presenting the other eight "communication stoppers". Each script with questions pertaining to it and additional ideas for the discussion of each "communication stopper" are presented subsequently.

Briefly stated, the sequence for presenting each "communication stopper" is:

1. Preliminary preparations with the children who will be assisting you.
2. Script reading.
3. Questions and answers relating to the script and a general discussion.
4. Class formulated definition.
5. Demonstration of positive communication skills and discussion.

Briefly review the "communication stoppers" that were focused on in prior class sessions as each new session begins. Write the definitions that the class formulates on a chart which may be posted on a bulletin board in the classroom. In this way the children will be reminded of the "communication stoppers" after they have experienced this series of activities.

II. Probing:

Person 1: Hi. Say, I wanted to tell you that I went to my grandparent's farm last weekend and . . .

Person 2: Which grandparents?

1: My dad's parents. Anyway, I was at the farm and I . . .

2: Where is their farm?

1: It's about 30 miles north of here.

2: Up in the mountains?

1: No, close to the mountains, but not up in the mountains. Anyway, when I was at their farm I learned how to milk their cow, and . . .

2: Who taught you?

1: My dad.

2: Your dad? I thought you were at your grandparent's farm.

1: Yes, but my dad grew up there and he knows how to milk cows.

2: Oh. Did it take you long to learn?

1: No. Anyway, I . . .

2: Why did you want to milk the cow?

1: Because I — because I just did.

2: Did you drink any of the milk?

1: No.

2: Well, why not?

- 1: That's what I've been trying to tell you. The cow stepped right into the bucket of milk.
- 2: Well, why did the cow do that?
- 1: I don't know. Why don't you go ask the cow?

Questions relating to the script on probing:

1. *What did (person 2) keep doing to (person 1)?*
2. *How did (person 2) probe?*
3. *In what way did the probing interfere with communication?*
4. *Did you notice any other "communication stoppers"? If so, what were they?*
5. *How do you think (person 1) felt after (person 2) did so much probing?*
6. *How do you feel when someone probes you?*

In the discussion, help the children to come up with the realization themselves that probing leads the person who wanted to communicate away from what he/she originally wanted to say. It often puts people "on the defensive" too.

III. Judging:

Person 1: My teacher is going to show us how to make wooden puppets and we're going to put on a puppet show for the first graders.

Person 2: Well, that sounds like a dumb idea.

- 1: It's going to be fun, but I don't know if I can make a puppet.
- 2: Yeah. You are kind of clumsy and awkward.
- 1: Oh. Well, anyway I *am* going to try.
- 2: Gee, that's great. You're a good kid, even if you can't do things very well.
- 1: Oh. The hardest part will probably be attaching the strings.
- 2: You are a worrier. You're getting all upset about it.
- 1: No, I'm not. It just seems like it's going to be kind of hard. Maybe I'll make a clown.
- 2: Don't make a clown. Clowns are dumb. Make something good.
- 1: Like what?
- 2: I don't know.

Questions relating to the script on judging:

1. *Who judged who?*
2. *How did (he/she) make the judgments?*
3. *Were all of the judgments negative?*
4. *Do you think the positive judgment made (person 1) feel good? Why or why not?*
5. *How do you think judging stops communication?*
6. *How does it affect you when someone talks to you like this?*

Help the children to realize through discussion that judging can stop communication, even when it is positive, because the person making the judgmental remarks puts him/herself in a superior position to the other person. The other person generally responds by feeling diminished and often doesn't feel motivated to continue communicating, since the two people now do not share an equal status.

IV. Interpreting:

Person 1: What did you do last weekend?

Person 2: I stayed home and read a book.

1: Oh. You're on restriction again.

2: No. I just felt like doing it.

1: You must be behind in your school work again.

2: No. I'm all caught up.

1: Aw, come on. The teacher made you do it.

2: No. It wasn't because of the teacher.

1: Then you're just trying to get in good with the teacher.

2: The teacher doesn't even know about it.

1: It must have been a pretty boring weekend.

2: No. I really enjoyed it.

1: You're wierd.

Questions relating to the script on interpreting:

1. What did (person 1) keep doing to (person 2)?
2. How did (he/she) make the interpretations?
3. How do you think interpreting stops communication?
4. How do you think it probably made (person 2) feel?
5. When this happens to you, how does it make you feel?

Discuss with the class how people often interpret each other's thoughts and feelings and behavior without realizing what they are doing. When we do this to each other we are not accepting one another just as we really are. When this happens to us, it makes us feel as though we are not valued as our real selves. It stops communication because it's hard to communicate with someone who won't let you just be yourself.

V. Confronting:

Person 1: I hit a home run!

Person 2: Well, why don't you just go ahead and brag about it?

1: Well, I do feel good about it.

2: You brag all the time.

1: Oh. Does it bother you?

2: Yes, and that's not all. You make me nervous the way you play. You're always trying to steal a base and taking chances. I want you to cut it out!

1: Well, so far so good. I don't make an out very often.

2: That's because you're lucky. You drive me crazy the way you play.

1: Gee, that's too bad. I only do my best.

2: Well, you best isn't good enough. You just don't concentrate like you should.

1: Oh. Say, how have you been doing lately?

2: Don't worry about me. Just get with it and improve your own playing ability.

Questions relating to the script on confronting:

1. What did (person 2) keep doing to (person 1)?
2. How did (person 2) confront (him/her)?

3. *In what way does confrontation stop communication?*
4. *How do you think (person 1) was probably feeling?*
5. *How do you feel when you are confronted?*

Discuss how confrontation makes a person feel downgraded and "put on the spot". It's practically impossible to communicate effectively after a confrontation because the confronted person very often feels so bad that it is not only hard to talk, but as one child once pointed out, it's even hard to think straight.

VI. Advising

Person 1: Hey, what's the matter?

Person 2: Oh, I've got a problem.

1: What is it?

2: One of my friends is moving away.

1: Oh. Don't get upset about it. Just make some new friends.

2: Well, I probably will. It's just that I'm really going to miss my friend.

1: Don't feel so sorry for yourself. Friends come and go. You'll get over it. Take my advice and just go make some new friends.

2: Well, that's easy for you to say. It's not your friend.

1: It's happened to me before. I just forget. That's what you ought to do. If you feel bad you have nobody to blame but yourself.

2: Gee. Thanks for the kind words.

1: That's okay. Anytime you need a friend just come to me.

Questions relating to the script on advising:

1. *What do you think was happening in this conversation?*
2. *What were the advising words and phrases that (person 1) used on (person 2)?*
3. *How do you think advising stops communication?*
4. *How do you think (person 2) was probably feeling?*
5. *How do you feel when someone gives you advice that you didn't ask for?*

Discuss how advising someone can make them feel inferior, much as "judging" does. Discuss also how often the advice given very frequently doesn't fit the needs of the person with the problem. Even if the advice is "right on", it is a "communication stopper" because it is hard for someone to continue to communicate openly when the response received comes across as belittling, as advice often does.

VII. Dominating

Person 1: Hi. I wanted to tell you about what I did last night.

Person 2: Oh, what was it?

1: I went to the football game with my aunt and uncle and we . . .

2: I went to the game last week. I went with one friend and then we saw some of my other friends there. We sat together and cheered for the team. We cheered louder than anybody there. All the people around us were cheering too.

- 1: I cheered too, but the team lost the game. We almost won, but . . .
- 2: Yeah, I heard about it. In the last few minutes the other team made another touchdown. Reminds me of all those games last year. We lost so many close games in the last few minutes that we should have won.
- 1: Even if we lost it was still a good game. I . . .
- 2: Yeah, but not as good as the one I saw. Last week the team was *really* playing well. We started off with two touchdowns in the first quarter. The best play was made when we intercepted that pass and ran it back for a touchdown. Wow! Everybody just went wild.
- 1: I know. We intercepted two passes last night, but . . .
- 2: Best game I ever saw. I liked the way it ended too. They just held those guys back for the entire last quarter. Those guys just couldn't move the ball at all because our defense was so good. They kept calling for time out and trying different plays, but nothing worked. Well, I have to go now. Thanks for telling me about the game you saw last night.

Questions relating to the script on dominating:

1. *What do you think was happening in this conversation?*
2. *Which person wanted to communicate at first?*
3. *Who ended up saying the most?*
4. *How did (person 2) dominate?*
5. *Do you think that (person 2) realized what (he/she) was doing?*
6. *How do you think (person 1) probably felt?*
7. *When someone dominates you in a conversation, how do you feel?*

Discuss how frustrating it is to be in a conversation when someone is dominating, especially when you have something you really want to share. Discuss also, how perhaps we are sometimes the one who dominates without realizing what we are doing. Also, when someone dominates, other people are almost completely forced to use the "communication stopper" *interrupting*, on the dominator, which may complicate things even more.

VIII. Putting Down

Person 1: Hey, you knothhead, watch where you're going.

Person 2: Oh, did I step on your toe?

1: What's the matter with you? Are you wierd or something? Couldn't you feel it?

2: Gee, no, I didn't. I'm sorry.

1: Well get with it, stupid.

2: Listen, I said I was sorry.

1: Yeah, yeah. You're sorry and that makes it okay. You're a real dummy.

2: Look, you jerk. If you don't want to get stepped on just stay out of the way.

1: Who do you think you're calling a jerk, you big dope.

2: You. You big idiot.

1: I'm not an idiot.

2: Yes, you are. Besides that, you're a real bonehead.

1: I am not.

2: You are too.

1: You're a dingbat.

2: You're a wierdo.

1: Nincompoop!

2: Doppel

Questions relating to the script on putting down:

1. *What do you think was happening in this conversation?*
2. *What were some of the ways that (person 1) put (person 2) down?*
3. *How did (person 2) react?*
4. *How productive do you think this conversation was?*
5. *How do you think (person 2) probably felt when (person 1) put (him/her) down?*
6. *How do you feel when someone puts you down?*

Out of an entire class who were asked, "should this script on putting down be included in the activities on 'communication stoppers'?", *not one* child answered, "no". Many remarked that they found it valuable. One child stated, *"It's good for people to be aware of things like that so they can avoid doing them."* Another said, *"It (the script) was helpful for kids who don't realize they're hurting people when they do it."*

Since the reading of this script is a mock situation, expect a lot of laughter from the class. But, when they have finished laughing, discuss this "communication stopper" very seriously. Give the children the chance to bring out the point themselves that putting people down is very destructive. We might think that perhaps one or two put-downs won't make someone feel too bad, but one or two usually lead to many, many more as the script illustrates. The person who has been put down feels insulted and has the need to "protect his/her honor" so the person often responds by reciprocating with put-downs on his/her provoker. This kind of negative interaction also tends to lead individuals into the habit of putting themselves down, a very unfortunate outcome. It is the accumulation of a large number of put downs over an extended period of time that makes us afraid to openly communicate our real thoughts and feelings with one another. Conversation is no longer real communication. Instead, it becomes like a sword fight at best, and at worst stops altogether, leaving people alone and empty.

AWARENESS

Awareness is a critical element in mental health. Aware people do not hide things from themselves. They know what's going on in the exterior world and they know what's going on inside themselves. They realize that they, as human beings, feel, think, and behave and they are cognizant of how these separate functions influence each other. The more aware they become of what their feelings are and how they use their thought processes, the more in charge they become of their behavior.

Awareness, therefore, is an important element in the Human Development Program. Activities relating to the three growth areas in the program, Awareness, Mastery and Social Interaction, have been planned and are presented, in such a way that the objective of increasing awareness in children will result. However, specific units on Awareness are warranted. These units, in a direct manner, focus the attention of the children on their feelings, thoughts and behaviors — the three cornerstones of human experience.

Often people are aware that they think, although they often underestimate these capabilities, and they know at varying levels of understanding, that they are behaving creatures, but it is in the area of feelings that many lack awareness. For some people, some feelings seem unacceptable if they are negative (anger, jealousy, fear — to name a few) and undeserved if they are positive (for example, when a person receives a compliment and won't allow him/herself to accept it). What we hope to demonstrate experientially to children through their daily involvement in the program in general, and in the Awareness units in particular, is that all people experience all of the emotions that can be experienced and that emotions cannot be judged right or wrong, good or bad, in a moral sense. Unfortunately, many people do attempt to judge their own and other people's feelings. Sometimes individuals do not acknowledge emotions that do not hold with the image they want to have of themselves, and some will criticize and try to "take away" emotions from others: ("Now don't feel that way. Shame on you!").

It is our belief that *behavior* may be evaluated, by oneself and by other people, but feelings simply are. To try to negate one's feelings or to attempt to take away a feeling in someone else only compounds the situation, as neuroses, insomnia, ulcers and miscommunication between persons will testify. For this reason, the feelings of each child, more than the content of his/her remarks, are focused on and accepted in every circle session. As Carl Rogers¹ states in *On Becoming a Person*:

"... when I can accept another person, which means specifically accepting the feelings and attitudes and beliefs that he has as a real and vital part of him, then I am assisting him to become a person: and there seems to me great value in this."

Similar to a feeling, a thought, in and of itself, can hurt no one. Thoughts can be the blueprint for humanity's noblest actions. The works of Socrates, Michelangelo, Shakespeare, Dorothea Dix, Beethoven, and Dr. Ralph Bunche, to name a few, were conceived first in their minds. Conversely, the most destructive actions of human beings were thoughts first. As Viktor Frankl² in *Man's Search for Meaning* states:

"After all, man is that being who has invented the gas chambers of Auschwitz; however, he is also that being who has entered those gas chambers upright, with the Lord's Prayer or the Shema Yisrael on his lips."

1 Rogers, Carl R., Ph.D., *On Becoming a Person, A Therapist's View of Psychotherapy*, Sentry Edition, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1961.

2 Frankl, Viktor E., M.D., Ph.D., *Man's Search for Meaning: An Introduction to Logotherapy*, Simon and Schuster, Inc., New York (twenty first printing, January, 1973).

Causes and ideals give meaning to our lives. We can remember things, use logic, make decisions, solve problems, and fantasize to name a few functions of our gift of intellect, which separates us from all other life on this planet. Yet we see that many humans use this gift without corresponding responsibility. If we are to progress (or even survive) as a species, we must begin to realize that our capabilities must be used with consideration for all life.

In its own way, the Human Development Program attempts to increase in children the awareness that their ability to think is a great power that they possess and may be used constructively in a multitude of ways. By participating in circle sessions, children will have the opportunity to be more aware of how often they personally use their thought processes to make life meaningful and productive.

By sharing their experiences another dimension of awareness also results. They begin to realize that other people think, feel and behave too. The children learn first hand that other people have these functions just like they do. And they learn that everyone's specific feelings, thoughts and behaviors are their own. They begin to see each person's uniqueness and to realize that they are unique too. If they are going to develop a sense of responsibility, they must first understand these concepts and develop feelings of concern and caring for others which grow out of these understandings. They are more likely to realize that they can never assume that everyone is just exactly like them. The needs, problems, values and preferences of others, whether they be one's relatives, neighbors, fellow citizens of one's country, fellow inhabitants of the world or fellow living creatures, must be considered before action is taken.

UNIT I

AWARENESS: POSITIVE FEELINGS, THOUGHTS AND BEHAVIOR

As the children experience this initial unit they will be given the opportunity to develop awareness via topics that involve positive feelings, thoughts and behavior. The overlapping of these functions becomes apparent as these sessions are carried out. Yet, by focusing on each area, in turn, the children may begin to see that these general areas of experience do exist. With this knowledge the children are given the opportunity to develop self awareness and awareness of others.

The positive aspects of human functioning are stressed throughout the program, but it is in these early stages that it is most important that the activities be elementary, eliciting positive feelings. Topics relating to such complex issues as problem-solving, decision-making and conflict resolution are introduced later when the children have had time to develop trust and understanding. At that time negative feelings are also discussed. For this reason, the topics in this unit relate to such things as happy memories, favorites, aesthetic appreciations and successes. These kinds of personal experiences, thoughts and feelings are shared while the children develop rapport with one another and learn how a circle session works.

Topics on Positive Feelings, Thoughts and Behavior:

Positive Feelings:

- "A Time When I Felt Happy"
- "My Favorite Place"
- "My Favorite Animal"
- "My Favorite Game"
- "A Time When Something Funny Happened"
- "A Time When I Felt Proud Of Myself"
- "A Time When I Had Unexpected Happy Feelings"

Positive Thoughts:

- "Something I Like To Imagine"
- "My Favorite Story"
- "Something That I Think Is Beautiful"
- "A Time When I Came Up With The Answer"
- "Something I'm Looking Forward To"
- "I Planned Something That Turned Out Well"
- "When I Thought It Over I Felt Better"

Positive Behavior:

- "What Is Positive Behavior?"
- "Someone Did Something That I Felt Good About"
- "How I Made Someone Feel Happy"
- "How I Like To Spend My Free Time"
- "An Adventure I Had"
- "If I Could Do Anything I Wanted"

POSITIVE FEELINGS

"A Time When I Felt Happy"

(IF YOU HAVE NOT READ "LEADING THE CIRCLE SESSION", PAGES 5 TO 9 BE SURE TO DO SO BEFORE PROCEEDING.)

This initial topic is presented in order that the children may express themselves on a very simple subject that is positive, while they begin the more complex task of learning the format and expectancies of the circle session. Help them to think of a time when they felt happy by asking them:

"Remember a time when you were feeling happy. What was it that brought about your happy feeling?"

Tell the children that if they wish to tell about what happened and describe the good feelings that they had, you would like to hear about it. Take your turn first, if necessary. As each child tells about a time when he/she felt happy, be sure to ask:

"Tell us about the happy feeling that you had."

"How did your body feel when you were happy?"

Right at first, emphasize the importance of behaving in accordance with the ground rules. Discuss with the children the reasons for having them. *The listening aspects are particularly important and should be stressed. For this reason be sure to conduct a review, in which the children reflect to each other, in turn, what they heard each other saying.*

Culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *Did you notice anything about what someone said that reminded you of what someone else said?*
2. *In what ways were their feelings similar?*

"My Favorite Place"

Discuss with the children how we are concentrating in our circle sessions on the feelings that we have. Yesterday we talked about a time when we felt happy and we found out that everyone has happy feelings about something that he/she remembers. The things that happened that produced the happy feelings were different for each of us and there may also have been some differences in the degrees to which we felt happy. But everyone who spoke told about having the same feeling — a feeling of happiness (joy, delight, pleasure, etc.).

Tell the children that today we will be talking about feelings again by thinking about a place where we like to be because we are usually happy when we are there. Take your turn first. Tell the children where your favorite place is. Then describe it and tell the group what you see, hear, smell, etc., around you when you are there. Then describe how you feel when you are there.

Ask the children to tell about their favorite places. As they participate ask them:

"What is it like? What do you see, hear, smell, etc., when you are there?"

"How do you feel when you are there?"

Discuss how talking about a thing such as a favorite place can bring the good feeling a person has when he/she is there, back in the present time.

Following the review, ask the children:

1. *What were some of the similarities that you noticed in the places that we told about?*
2. *What were some similarities in the feelings that we described?*

"My Favorite Animal"

Discuss briefly with the children how animals bring joy into our lives. Clarify the topic by asking them:

"Tell us about an animal that you are particularly fond of, such as a specific pet of your own, or someone else's, or it could be a type or breed of animal that you enjoy seeing at the zoo or reading about in books."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How do you feel when you (hold, ride, pet, look at or read about) your favorite animal?"

Following a review of what each person who participated told about, ask the children:

1. *What was the same about everyone who told about their favorite animal and what was different?*

(Everyone had an animal in mind but for each person it was a different animal, with possibly a few exceptions. Although this is elementary, it is a vital concept, which leads the children to an experiential understanding of the important concept that all people have feelings but do not feel the same way about the same things. Therefore, each of us is unique and that's okay.)

"My Favorite Game"

By informing one another of such things as their favorite games and how they feel when they play them, the children are not only becoming more aware of their own and each other's preferences, but also that each person reacts to the external world in their own way.

As in the case with favorite animals, the topic is very broad. Begin the session by asking the children:

"Think about a game that you like to play or participate in as a spectator. Tell us about it."

The most important aspect of this session is to encourage the children to describe how they feel as they play the game or as they watch other people play it. To help them express their feelings as fully as possible, ask them:

"Tell us how you feel as you (pitch the ball, run fast in the relay, hit the ball over the net, etc.)."

After reviewing, help the children to focus on the major points of importance resulting from the session, by asking:

1. *Did everyone who spoke have a favorite game?*
2. *What were the similarities and differences that you may have noticed between the games we told about and/or how we felt as we played them?*

"A Time When Something Funny Happened"

Most people love to relay humorous stories to one another. By "giving permission" to them to tell about something funny that happened, you are letting the children know that laughter and good feelings in the here-and-now are an acceptable part of a circle session. Begin the session by asking the children:

"Think about something funny that you saw or that you were involved in that didn't hurt anyone. Tell us about the funny part."

(Where and when it happened are not important details.) As the children participate, ask them:

"How did you feel?"

"How did you react?"

Sometimes the children will tell about something that they did as a younger child and as they look back they see it now as funny. This demonstrates their human capability to look at themselves and even laugh at themselves.

Let the children know that it is as acceptable to laugh in a circle session as it is to tell about their feelings. If you feel amused laugh with them.

Following a review, in which the children reflect to each other the funny parts of each other's stories and how they felt, culminate by asking the children:

1. *What is it about something funny that makes it funny?*
2. *How do most (or all) of us seem to feel when we are reacting to something funny?*

WHEN ASKED, "WHAT IS YOUR FEELING WHEN YOU . . . ? CHILDREN OFTEN RESPOND ONE AFTER ANOTHER WITH SUCH WORDS AS "GOOD" OR "FINE", ESPECIALLY AT FIRST. TO HELP THEM EXPRESS THEIR FEELINGS MORE PRECISELY AND FULLY ASK ANY OF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

"You feel good, like . . . (pause) . . . ? (how? or what?)"

"How does your body feel when you feel like that?"

"Does your body feel closed-in or expanded?"

"How do you breathe when you feel like that?"

"How do you hold your shoulders when you feel like that?"

"If you were a horse, what would you be doing?" (prancing, bucking, whinnying, etc.)"

OTHER THINGS TO DO:

Each time you take your turn, try to use a "feeling word" that has not been used in the group before.

When a child says a new "feeling word" — call the group's attention to it. Make a list of "feeling words". (See Appendix C.)

"A Time When I Felt Proud Of Myself"

One of the most positive feelings people have is when they feel proud of themselves. The concern for self-esteem is addressed consistently throughout the Human Development Program, particularly in the units and activities on Mastery, but since the feeling of pride in oneself is so powerful and important as a positive emotion, the children will be given their first opportunity in a circle session to increase their own self-pride at this time. Begin the session by asking them:

"Think of a time when you were feeling very proud and pleased with yourself. It may have been because you did, or said, something that you are glad that you did, or said, or maybe you were just feeling very glad that you are you. Tell us about it."

As the children participate ask them:

"Tell us how you (helped your Grandfather)."

"What was the feeling that you had about yourself when you did it?"

"As you recall a time when you felt proud of yourself, how does it make you feel about yourself right now?"

Following a review of what each person who participated told about, culminate by asking the children:

1. *What were the kinds of things that gave us proud feelings about ourselves?*
2. *Do we have to do, or say, certain things all the time in order for us to feel proud of ourselves, or do you think it's okay for us to feel good about ourselves at any time?*
3. *Is it okay for us to feel proud of ourselves right now?*

"A Time When I Had Unexpected Happy Feelings"

Today the children will be given an opportunity to tell about a pleasant surprise. Begin by asking them:

"Think about a time when something happened that you weren't expecting that pleased you very much. Tell us about what it was."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How did you feel when (your cousins came over to your house to visit your family)?"

"How did you react when you were feeling so happy?"

Discuss how remembering things like pleasant surprises can bring the happy feelings that were experienced then, back to us in the here and now. Culminate by asking the children:

1. *Think of someone who you could give unexpected happy feelings to today. What could you do to pleasantly surprise him/her?*
2. *Are surprises always pleasant?*

SUPPLEMENTARY ACTIVITIES RELATED TO POSITIVE FEELINGS:

Art: Happiness Posters

Ask the children to make posters on large sheets of paper completing the statement, "Happiness is . . . ('eating dessert first', 'getting snowed-in in the hobby shop', 'hitting a home run with the bases loaded', and so on). The statement that they think of should be something that *for each of them* would produce happy feelings. Ask them to illustrate the statements they think of with large figures and bright colors, (possibly using chalk on manila paper brushed with sugar water, if available).

Sharing Good Feelings

Suggest to the children that they tell you or another circle member when they are feeling good during the school day in the classroom or on the playground. Each day they may tell a different circle member and they should try to do it at least once each day. Point out to them that at times someone may choose to tell this to them and when this happens it should be considered an honor. Ask them to simply repeat to the first child, "You feel good right now," or whatever words the first child used to express his/her pleasant feeling. Reflection of this nature is used as a way of showing understanding of, and acceptance for, the child's feelings.

Creative Writing About Feeling Good

Ask the children to write a story, the title being any of the topics related to positive feelings.

POSITIVE THOUGHTS

"Something I Like To Imagine"

Discuss with the children how we have been talking about the feelings that we have and tell them that today we are going to talk about thoughts too. Discuss the difference between thoughts and feelings with them and how they are related to each other. Discuss also how people often confuse their feelings with their thoughts. Sometimes when someone is asked how they felt about something they respond with what they were thinking. Tell the group the following examples:

JOHN: *"How do you feel about the problem?"*

MAE: *"I think we'd better work it out some other time."*

Point out to the children that one of the ways in which we use our ability to think is to imagine things. People are able to do many things because they imagine doing them first. Another way we use our imagination is to simply fantasize enjoyable ideas.

Begin this session by telling the children what the topic is. Then ask them:

"Think about something that you like to imagine. Maybe it is something that you did once, or that you would like to do, or maybe it is some kind of a wish for something special that you would like to have. Tell us about it."

As the children participate ask them:

"How do you feel when you imagine (going on a camping trip)?"

"How do you think you would feel (if you were there)?"

Culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *What is the difference between a thought and a feeling?*
2. *Who can give an example of each?*
3. *What are some ways in which using our imaginations can help us?*

"My Favorite Story"

An enjoyable experience for most people is to relate to others a part of a story that to them is meaningful in some way. Today the children will have an opportunity to do this. Clarify the topic with them by asking:

"Think about a story that you have heard or read that you found to be interesting or exciting or maybe even fascinating. The story may have been in a book or the plot of a movie or TV show. Tell us about the part that you liked."

After the children describe the part that to them was interesting, ask each one:

"How did you feel as you read, heard or watched that part?"

"How do you think the characters in the story were feeling?"

Sometimes children will tell about episodes that are generally distasteful to most adults and it is hard for us to keep from disapproving. While you are entitled to your feelings too, it is important that you demonstrate to the children that you accept the feelings that they express. *Any judgments on your part will very likely be detrimental to any future sharing of feelings.*

Following a review, culminate by asking the children:

1. *What were some of the main feeling reactions that were expressed in the group today to the stories that we told about?*
2. *If all of us read the same story do you think we would all get the same feelings?*

"Something That I Think Is Beautiful"

The things that we find beautiful in the world give us a great deal of pleasure. It is also pleasurable for most people to tell others about what they find to be beautiful. It also increases our understanding of other people when we know what they appreciate.

Begin the session by asking the children:

"Think about something that to you is beautiful. It could be an entire scene, such as a view from a mountaintop or in a park, or just one object, such as a stone."

As the children name things that they think are beautiful, ask them:

"Describe it and tell us how you feel as you (look at it, or hold it, or other)."

If necessary, take your turn first today. Following a review, summarize by asking the children:

1. *Does everyone see beauty in exactly the same things in exactly the same way?*
2. *In what ways does a session like this help us to get to know each other better?*

"A Time When I Came Up With The Answer"

Figuring something out feels good, whether the process was laborious or the answer popped into one's head. It also feels good, in an atmosphere of acceptance and respect, to tell about it. (In an atmosphere of non-acceptance most people are particularly reticent to tell of a personal success because it might invite criticism and accusations that the teller is bragging.) In a secure atmosphere, however, the telling of a small, or great, triumph generally reinforces the teller's feelings of competence and self-worth.

If necessary, start the session by telling about a time when you came up with an answer and how you felt about it. Then tell the children:

"Think of a time when you worked out a solution to some kind of problem. It could have been a math problem or some kind of problem that involved people. Tell how you figured out the answer, or solution, to the problem."

As the children relate their stories ask each one:

"How did you feel when you found out that your answer or solution was a good one?"

By way of a culmination, ask the children:

1. *Do you think it is good to talk about your abilities and successes?*
2. *Why do you think it is hard to do it sometimes?*

"Something I'm Looking Forward To"

Today we turn our attention toward the future. Clarify the topic by asking the children:

"Think about something that you are looking forward to. It could be anything — playing in the little league next Spring, going on a trip with your family for the weekend, or spending the afternoon with a friend. Tell us about it."

If necessary, take your turn first. As the children tell about what they are looking forward to, ask them:

"How do you feel right now as you think about it?"

"What kind of feelings do you expect to have when you are doing it?"

After reviewing, culminate by asking the children:

1. *Did our feelings about something in the future seem to be as strong as feelings we have about things in the present and in the past?*
2. *What were some other kinds of feelings besides good feelings that were mentioned (if any)?*
3. *What causes these other feelings (if there were any)?*

"I planned Something That Turned Out Well"

One of the most important ways in which human beings use their ability to think is to make plans. The sooner children become aware that they are capable of consciously deciding what they want to do and what they want to have happen, the more in control they become of themselves and the less prone they are to being buffeted about by occurrences that prevail around them. Today the children will be given an opportunity to tell about a time when they successfully planned something. Begin the session by asking them:

"Think about a time when you decided that you wanted something to happen in a certain way so you made plans for it to go that way and things turned out well. Tell us about what happened."

Following each child's remarks, ask:

"How did you feel when you first started thinking about the situation?"

"How did you feel when your plan worked?"

Discuss with the children how good it feels when we decide to make a plan and things turn out well.

Following a review, culminate the session by asking them:

1. *In order to come up with good plans what do you think we need to do first?*
2. *Will the same plan work for any situation?*
3. *Are there ever times when thinking up a plan just won't work? When?*

IF IT GETS HARD TO DO IT ALL IN 20-30 MINUTES

Take your turn first in the next session and, by way of example, be brief.

Urge the children at the outset of the next session to talk mostly about their *feelings*. Explain that details such as why, where and when, and especially who, are usually unimportant.

Have an understanding with the children that they may have a second turn *only* if everyone who wants to speak has had their chance and if there is *plenty* of time.

If the session gets away from a discussion of the topic and feelings, tactfully remind the children that we "need to get back to giving everyone a turn who wants one, and to review what was said."

In the review, ask ("Who will tell Lee what he said his *feelings* were when he was able to help his grandfather, and a *little bit* about *how* he did it?").

Remember that the purpose of the summary questions is mainly to give the children something to think over and *make up their own minds about*. A full discussion is not necessary unless time is left and interest is high.

"When I Thought It Over I Felt Better"

Our emotions affect our thoughts and vice-versa. Sometimes we are feeling dejected about something and then we "sit down and think it over". A result very often is to view the thing that is giving us bad feelings from another vantage point. We gain insight and understanding of the circumstances and we begin to see options and alternatives. We are capable of reasoning with ourselves just as we can with others.

Today the children will be given an opportunity to discuss how their ability to reason changed the state of their emotions from a rather negative state to a more positive one. Begin the session by asking them:

"Have you ever been feeling bad about something and then started to think it over and felt better as a result. Maybe something happened that didn't make sense at first and you felt bad about it, but then after you reviewed it in your mind you realized that there were reasons. Tell us about what happened, how you thought it over and how you felt then."

As the children participate, help them to clarify their remarks by asking them:

"How were you feeling before you thought it over?"

"What were the thoughts that you had that helped you to feel better?"

Since this is the most complex topic that has been presented so far in this guide, it is likely that a number of children may prefer to listen only today.

Discuss how hard it often is to think things over at first when we are upset, but how at some point, it helps to stop and think. When we do this we can usually see things more clearly and that may possibly help us to feel better.

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *How often do you think people should think things over?*

SUPPLEMENTARY ACTIVITIES RELATED TO POSITIVE THOUGHTS:

Planning Positive Actions

Suggest to the children that they think of a way to try to cause someone to have good feelings and then do the thing they thought of for the person. Point out that it would be best if they did the action when they are feeling good toward the person. Suggest to them that they should try to remember to do it at least once a day and to choose a different person each day to do it for. If they want to know how the person feels they may ask him/her.

Art: Astronomical Fantasies

Ask the children to use their imaginations and create a picture showing what life on another planet in another galaxy is like, according to their "mind's eye." Point out to them how everyone's picture is different, yet we all have the ability to think of those ideas and to plan how to present them on paper.

Music Appreciation

Play a recording of beautiful music for the class and point out how it first existed in the composer's mind.

POSITIVE BEHAVIOR

"What Is Positive Behavior?"

Begin today's session by discussing with the children how we have been focusing our attention on our feelings and thoughts, especially ones that have been pleasant, or *positive*. Tell them that today we are going to begin to focus on the third realm of human experience, behavior. And again, we will focus on *positive* aspects. Then ask the children:

"What is positive behavior?"

Today the children are not being directly asked to share an experience or their feelings with the group. Rather their opinions are requested. Be sure to accept each opinion, just as feelings are accepted in the circle session.

It is likely that some of the children will tell about personal experiences, and sharing of this nature should be welcomed and encouraged. In these cases, ask:

"How did you feel (when you arrived on time)?"

Following a review of the salient parts of what each child who spoke said, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *What is it about positive behavior that makes it **positive**?*
2. *Who can benefit from positive behavior?*

"Someone Did Something That I Felt Good About"

Today the children will continue to focus on positive behavior by discussing behaviors that they have observed in other people. Begin the session by briefly reviewing as a group the ideas that were shared in yesterday's session about positive behavior. Then ask the children:

"Have you ever seen someone do something for you, for someone else, or for themself, that you felt good about? Tell us about their positive behavior."

As each child participates, ask:

"How did (your friend stick up for his brother)?"

"In what way did you feel good about it?"

Following a review, ask the children:

1. *Are there just a few ways, or many ways, in which people can behave positively?*
2. *When do you seem to have the strongest feelings about someone's behavior — when they do something to someone else or when they do something to you?*
3. *When is a behavior not positive?*

"How I Made Someone Feel Happy"

Today the children will focus on their own behavior.

It generally makes us happy if we find that we have effectively made someone else feel happy. And our feelings of effectiveness can be enhanced if we have an opportunity to tell someone else about how we did it. Today the children will be able to do just this.

Tell the children what the topic is and ask them:

"Describe what you did to make someone feel happy."

As they begin to relate to the topic, ask them:

"How did you do it?"

"How could you tell that they felt good?"

"How does it feel to know that you are able to make someone feel happy?"

Following a review of how the children made someone feel happy and the feelings they had as a result, culminate by asking them:

1. *What usually happens to our own feelings when we have successfully made someone else feel happy?*

"How I Like To Spend My Free Time"

Today the children are given the opportunity to tell each other about the ways they enjoy behaving when the choice is theirs.

Tell them what the topic is and ask them:

"Tell us about one (or possibly two) things that you like to do in your free time."

Ask them to describe the activity and then ask them:

"How do you feel when you are (spending time with your friends)?"

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *Do all of us seem to like having free time for doing the things we enjoy?*
2. *Do we all enjoy doing the same things?*
3. *Do we enjoy them for the very same reason and in the very same way? (For those who mentioned liking to the same things.)*

"An Adventure I Had"

Two sessions may be needed for this topic because children love to talk about their adventures and are often able to relate detailed accounts. By way of explaining the topic to the children, tell them:

"Think about some kind of an adventure you have had. It could be anything that you did, or were involved in, that made you feel good. It may have been an over-night camping trip, your first ride in an airplane, or a time when you spent the night at a friend's house. Tell us about it."

Let the children know at the outset that if it seems like two sessions will be needed in order for everyone to have enough time to tell about their adventure, two sessions will be taken.

As they relate their adventures, ask them to tell how they felt at various points in their stories:

"How did you feel (as you climbed that hill)?"

"How did you feel (when you got to the top)?"

(By this time, it is likely that the children will be telling about their feelings without solicitation.) Following a review, culminate by asking the children:

1. *What were some of the similarities and differences that you may have noticed in the feelings that we told about?*

"If I Could Do Anything I Wanted"

Today the children will have the opportunity to use their imaginations to think of behaviors that they would enjoy if they could do anything they wanted.

To clarify the topic, ask the children:

"Think of something that you would like to do if you could do anything you wanted that wouldn't bother anyone else. It might be something that seems very unlikely to ever happen or something that might happen. Tell us about what it would be."

As they respond, ask them:

"How do you think you would feel if you could (fly in a rocket ship)?"

(Discussions of why the children have not done these things, or the likelihood that they ever will, are not necessarily relevant.)

Following a review, culminate by asking the children:

1. *Would all of us choose to do the same thing if we could do anything that we wanted to do?*
2. *Did some of us expect to have similar feelings if we could do anything we wanted to do, even though the behaviors might have been different?*

SUPPLEMENTARY ACTIVITIES RELATED TO POSITIVE BEHAVIOR:

Small Group Positive Behavior

Ask the children to form small groups of approximately 3 to 4 children to meet independently as committees to decide on an activity they could undertake in which they might create, or improve on something that would benefit the entire class in some way. Ask them to check with you on their idea before proceeding to implement it. Give them one or more time periods that day, and perhaps the next, to carry out their positive behavior. When all of the groups have completed the task they chose they may make a presentation to the class, describing how they decided on what to do and how they carried out the task.

A Daily Positive Behavioral Prescription

Suggest to the children that they try to remember to behave positively for their own benefit and for the benefit of someone else at least once each day.

Creative Dramatics: Positive Behavior Made Vivid

Ask 5 or 6 of the children who are members of a circle session to pick a partner (one of the other children in the class) and to pair off with the child they picked, to plan and present a short drama to the rest of the class. By way of direction, ask them to demonstrate at least one positive behavior in their presentation.

SOCIAL INTERACTION

Relating effectively with other people is a challenge we all face. It is a matter that is constantly at the forefront of all of our lives. Some people consistently seem to be capable of effectively relating to, and interacting with, others in personal and social situations. They are generally able to perceive the mood of individuals and groups and are able to communicate appropriately and facilitatively with them. They can process the non-verbal as well as the verbal messages of others and they realize that people have the power to affect one another. They are aware, not only of how others affect them, but also of the effect of *their* behavior upon others and of the accompanying responsibility for their actions. They are likely to consider the feelings of others and to listen to their ideas.

According to Harvey Jackins¹, author of *The Human Side of Human Beings*, every person is *inherently* intelligent, zestful and capable of loving, cooperative relationships with others. With respect to this third characteristic, Jackins states:

"This relationship seems to consist precisely of enjoying affection to another person, enjoying affection from another person, enjoying communication with another person, and enjoying cooperation with another person."

"These," he concludes, "seem to constitute the essential human nature. All the rest of human behavior and feeling except these three innate characteristics and their results, is acquired, is *not* inherent, is the result of something having gone *wrong*."

Jackins continues to explain that what goes wrong is that we get hurt and these hurts affect our intelligence, our zest for living and our relationships with others. We find it difficult to accept, or listen to, or cooperate with each other because all of us have been hurt many times and in many ways. We then have great difficulty liking, trusting and sometimes even respecting others and they have the same difficulties with us. Our social interactions thereby suffer and we do not enjoy each other as we potentially could.

Logically, the next question that needs to be asked is, "What can we do about this situation?"

The children with whom we work deal with other people every day — their peers and significant adults. They need positive interpersonal experiences and information in the social realm in order to offset prior difficulties and to build healthy relationships with other people. Yet, as Carl Rogers² points out in his book, entitled *Becoming Partners* (page 39), the educational system has largely failed to meet the needs of children to learn how to understand and get along with other people in any systematic way.

If they are fortunate, children are surrounded by people who will give them attention. In the case of people who are older than they, it is highly desirable that healthy, responsible behavior be modeled. And if the children are listened to and their feelings are accepted and they learn how to do this with others, they are indeed fortunate.

In a deliberate way the Human Development Program has been designed so that these things will occur for at least 20 to 30 minutes each day in the lives of the children who participate in circle sessions. The program attempts to actualize the positive qualities that are *inherent*, as Jackins claims, in all of us. By its format and process it allows the children to practice positive modes of communication, which we have seen them transfer to other situations.

¹ Jackins, Harvey, *The Human Side of Human Beings, The Theory of Re-evaluation Counseling*, Rational Island Publishers, Seattle, (First Paperback Printing, July, 1972).

² Rogers, Carl R., Ph.D., *Becoming Partners: Marriage and its Alternatives*, New York: Delacorte Press, 1972; Delta Edition (Softcover), 1973.

In the units on Social Interaction the Human Development Program attempts to bring the basic issues in interpersonal transactions and communication to the children's awareness. The children are given the opportunity to discuss what goes into a relationship that makes it a friendly, trusting one and what some of the problems are in relationships. They focus in the sessions on *how* certain behaviors, such as resolving conflicts, have few hard and fast rules so each person needs to be alert and flexible. They discuss how open communication is important, but not always easy, and they share some positive new ways of relating to others.

Frances Castan¹ has quoted Norman Newberg, Director of the Affective Education Program in the School District of Philadelphia, as stating: "We've a Sunday School idea of how people should ultimately behave, but no one defines or describes the intermediate steps." The Social Interaction topics which deal with nitty gritty aspects of human involvement, *and how the children feel*, are presented in a sequence in which understanding of these intermediate steps can grow and develop.

¹ Castan, Frances, "Alternatives to Corporal Punishment," *Scholastic Teacher*, Junior/Senior High Teacher's Edition, (September, 1973), pp. 21-7.

UNIT II

SOCIAL INTERACTION: BUILDING TRUST

A critical component in carrying out a program which attempts to meet the emotional and social needs of students, is to develop trust among them. This feeling of confidence must develop between them, not so that they may divulge information about their private lives to one another, (this is not the purpose of the circle session), but to provide an accepting atmosphere in which students feel comfortable in sharing their ideas and most importantly, *their feelings*, with one another. It is difficult, if not impossible, for human beings to tell about what's going on inside of them if they are not sure how the person listening will respond. It is important, therefore, that this feeling of trust develop between the group members in order that the discussions, which become increasingly more complex, may begin to have meaning and significance for them. Trust must grow between the students and the group leader on an individual, as well as a group, basis in order for the sessions to be considered successful.

This unit, dealing specifically with trust, is presented early in the guide because of its primary importance. By exploring how they have trusted, and not trusted other people, and have been trusted by others, the children systematically examine the elements of human confidence. Based on research with groups of children, it can be assumed that through this process some degree of awareness will result in the participants. They will have an opportunity, through the discussions, to understand more about establishing trust between persons, what is expected from others in order to trust them, and what they need to do to demonstrate that they are trustworthy. Upon this foundation, further development in the areas of *Awareness*, *Social Interaction* and *Self Confidence* may be gained.

Topics on Building Trust:

- "What People Need from Each Other in Order to be Good Friends"
- "A Place Where I Feel Safe"
- "A Person I Feel Safe With"
- "Someone I Don't Trust Very Much"
- "Someone Who Trusts Me"
- "A Time When I Trusted Myself" or "I Knew I Could Do It"
- "When Someone Betrayed My Trust"
- "I Didn't Trust Someone Because of What Someone Else Said"
- "Someone I Learned to Trust"
- "A Risk I Took and I Was Glad"
- "A Risk I Took and I Was Sorry"
- "How I Show Someone That They Can Trust Me"

"What People Need From Each Other In Order To Be Good Friends"

Before discussing issues directly involving trust, the children are given the opportunity in this activity to mention trust themselves — thereby bringing this important component in healthy human relations to their own attention. It is then likely that subsequent discussions on trust will be more meaningful.

Another aspect of this topic is that it seeks opinions rather than statements of personal feelings. Today feelings will not be directly requested, *but welcomed* if they spontaneously evolve from the discussion. Our rationale here is to cognitively orient the children to the area of human interrelationships via their thoughts, which are generally easier to talk about when embarking on a totally new subject.

Begin the discussion by giving your opinion first. Name one thing you think people need from each other in order to be friends and elaborate on it briefly and clearly. Then ask the children:

"Do you have an opinion about what people need from each other in order to be friends?"

Point out that whatever they think is acceptable. Just naming one thing and telling a little bit about it is preferable to listing a lot of things mechanically.

Discuss briefly how real our feelings of satisfaction are when we get what we need from our friends and how real our feelings of disappointment are when we don't.

Following the review of the salient parts of what each child said, ask the children:

(Skip questions 1 and 2 if trust was mentioned in the session.)

1. *Do you think people need to trust each other in order to be good friends?*
2. *Why?*
3. *Do you just imagine it when you feel bad when you aren't getting what you need from someone?*
4. *Are they imagining it when they aren't getting what they need from you?*

"A Place Where I Feel Safe"

By discussing this topic the children will continue to focus on the issue of trust, this time speaking about their own personal experiences and feelings.

Begin by taking your turn first. Briefly describe a place where you feel comfortable because you feel safe with the people there. Tell in what way you feel safe with them. Then ask the children:

"Is there some place where you feel safe or comfortable? Tell us about it."

Some of them may mention a place where there are no people, or possibly a place with people their own age with whom they enjoy being. Discuss with the children how some people do feel safest when they are not around any people at all or around certain individuals. A place is unsafe if you know you could get hurt there. We do feel hurt feelings caused by ridicule, etc., and they are just as real as hurts to our bodies. No one likes being hurt, whether it is a physical or an emotional hurt. Both kinds feel bad.

After reviewing, culminate by asking the children:

1. *What makes a place unsafe?*
2. *Are hurt feelings just as real as hurts to our bodies?*
3. *What do we try to remember to do in a circle session to make it a safe place?*

Discuss how listening and accepting the feelings that are told about can make the circle a safe place. If you accept someone's feelings, you are accepting him/her. If you reject their feelings, you are rejecting him/her.

"A Person I Feel Safe With"

The best friendships are between people who trust each other. They trust each other because they are careful not to hurt each other. They make it safe for each other to "be themselves" when they are together.

Today's topic goes hand-in-hand with, "A Place Where I Feel Safe," which preceded it. Today we will concentrate on the same concepts, this time via a close look at certain human behaviors. Begin the session by asking the children:

"Do you know someone with whom you feel safe? . . . Someone you can trust not to hurt you — your body, or your feelings? Tell us about the person and in what way you feel safe with him/her."

Explain to the children that we are interested in knowing how the person *behaves* when you are with him/her. Ask:

"How do they treat you?"

"Do you feel that it's okay to let them know how you really feel about things?"

Following a brief review, ask the children:

1. *In most cases, did the people we told about accept or reject our feelings?*
2. *When do people hide the way they really feel?*

"Someone I Don't Trust Very Much"

Today we look closely at the opposite side of the coin, which will continue to bring the issues involved in trust and relationships into sharp focus. The best friendships are between people who trust each other. They trust each other because they are careful not to hurt each other.

This is the first topic that is negative in tone so it would probably be best if you took your turn first in order to demonstrate to the children that it is okay to discuss it. Point out to the children at the outset that today it is particularly important that we remember not to mention names. Then briefly tell about someone you don't trust or didn't trust as a child and what kinds of things the person does (or did) that causes (or caused) you not to trust him/her very much.

Then invite the children to take a turn. Ask:

"Is there someone who you don't trust very much? Tell us about what the person does that makes it hard for you to trust him/her."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How does this person make you feel when he/she does these things?"

It is likely that some will refrain from speaking today. Many may need to "just listen". Treat the topic in a very matter-of-fact way. Be sure to demonstrate by your behavior to the children who speak that their feelings of not trusting someone are acceptable. To those who do not wish to speak, demonstrate that their wish to just listen is acceptable.

Following a review, ask the children:

1. *What kinds of things do the people that we don't trust very much do?*
2. *If you want people to trust you how do you think you should treat them?*

"Someone Who Trusts Me"

Today the children will be given the opportunity to focus their attention on how it feels to have someone trust them. Some may not have been aware, up till now, when they stopped to think about it, that there is someone who trusts them. For some of the children, the "someone" who trusts them may be an animal. (In the case of those children who cannot think of anyone who trusts them, this will be an important session too.)

Begin by asking the children:

"Tell about a relationship you have with someone you are sure trusts you."

As the children participate, ask them:

"What kind of things do you do together?"

"How do you know they trust you?"

"How does it feel to have their trust?"

Following the review, ask the children:

1. *In most (or all) of us, what was the feeling we had about having someone trust us?*
2. *Do you usually trust people who trust you?*

"A Time When I Trusted Myself" Or "I Knew I Could Do It"

Whenever we experience a situation in which we prove to ourselves that we are capable, our capacity to trust ourselves more in the future expands. It is a very positive experience overall. By sharing a time when they trusted themselves, the children are given the opportunity to reinforce these positive feelings. Begin the session by asking them:

"Think about a time when you were pleased with yourself because you did something you were sure you could do. Tell us about what happened."

As the children tell about their experiences, point out to them that they trusted themselves. Ask them:

"How did you feel when you found out that you were right to trust yourself?"

Following a review, culminate by asking the children:

1. *Can a person learn to trust him/herself more?*
2. *How?*

"When Someone Betrayed My Trust"

Today's topic differs somewhat from "Someone I Don't Trust Very Much" in that today the focus will be on a specific incident and the specific feelings which resulted, rather than reactions to repeated forms of behavior.

Since this is a negative topic, you may wish to take your turn first. Being careful not to mention the name of the person who betrayed your trust, briefly tell about an incident in which this happened to you and how you felt as a result. Tell also how much (or how little) you trusted the person after the incident.

Then ask the children:

"Have you ever had anything like this happen to you? Tell us about it."

Before they begin, remind them not to tell the name of the person who betrayed their trust. Be sure to ask:

"How did you feel when the incident took place?"

"How much (or how little) do you trust the person now?"

Following a review, ask the children:

1. *If you want someone's trust and you betray them just once, do you think they will trust you after that?*

"I Didn't Trust Someone Because Of What Someone Else Said"

Often we take the word of someone else in order to "make up our minds" about a lot of things — where to go for our vacation, who to vote for, how to feel about some person, and so on. While this is to some degree an inescapable practice in our complex world, we often overdo it for a number of reasons and many people begin the habit in childhood. For this reason, we introduce the idea to the children that sometimes we decide not to trust someone purely on the basis of what someone else said, thereby at least bringing to their awareness that this is done. Some may consider further in their own minds whether this is a "good" or "bad" thing to do.

To get the ball rolling, you may decide to go first today, telling about a time when you, as a child, or recently as an adult, decided not to trust someone because of what someone else said. (The outcome of having done this is not the focus, but it may be of interest.) Then ask the children:

*"Did you ever decide not to trust someone because of what someone else said?
Tell us about it."*

Be sure to urge the children not to mention names again today. It would not be too unusual for a number of children to decide to "just listen" due to the rather complex nature of the topic. Following a review, culminate by asking them:

1. *Do you think it is **always** a good idea to decide whether or not to trust someone because of what someone else said?*
2. *Do you think it is **always** a bad idea?*
3. *If you want to know whether or not to trust someone, what do you think is the very best way to find out?*

"Someone I Learned To Trust"

When you trust someone you not only like them — you respect them too.

Discuss with the children how sometimes, for some reason, we have trouble trusting someone before we really give them a chance. Maybe they remind us of someone else we didn't trust or possibly they belong to some group (like an age group or racial group) that we have heard bad things about. Sometimes people do this to us, but today we will talk about how we changed ourselves from doing it to someone else.

This is a fairly complex topic so it might be a good idea if you took your turn first. Briefly tell about someone you didn't trust at first because of something about them that they couldn't help, like a handicap or like their age or the color of their skin. Tell how you felt about the person at first (being sure not to mention their name) and then what happened that caused you to see the person as they really are and how you learned to trust them and like them.

Invite the children to tell about how they learned to trust and like someone they didn't trust and like at first, by asking:

"Has anything like this ever happened to you? Tell us how you felt at first about the person and what it was that changed your attitude."

Point out how we all have the power to change ourselves when we can see that we were wrong about someone or something.

Following a brief review, ask the children:

1. *Why do you think a person, who is a member of some group, may not trust people who are members of some other group?*
2. *What do you think is needed in order for them to trust each other?*

"A Risk I Took And I Was Glad"

Sometimes we decide to trust someone when it is a risk and sometimes the risk pays off. Other times it might not. This and tomorrow's session, "I Took a Risk and I Was Sorry", therefore, go hand-in-hand and should be discussed in sequence.

Discuss the idea with the children that we all take risks everyday — sometimes little ones and sometimes big ones. Ask them:

"Have you ever tried something when you weren't sure how it would turn out, but you were glad after you did it? It may have been deciding to trust someone when you really weren't sure about the person, or it may have been some other kind of a risk. Tell us about it."

As each child takes his/her turn, ask:

"What kinds of feelings did you have before you took the risk and afterward?"

After reviewing, culminate by asking the children:

1. *What do you think gets a person to take a risk even if they are unsure, or scared, of what the results will be?*

"A Risk I Took And I Was Sorry"

This topic goes hand in hand with "I Took a Risk and I Was Glad," because it gives the children the opportunity to discuss the reality that when a risk is taken, the potential for a negative outcome is just as present as the possibility for a positive outcome.

Be sure not to allow personalities to become the focus with this topic. Begin by discussing again with the children how it is necessary for us each day to make decisions regarding risks. Sometimes these risks involve trusting someone. Whether it is this kind of a risk or not, we usually have lots of feelings before and after we take the risk. Before we take the risk, we know we might feel good or we might feel bad. The not-knowing causes feelings of uncertainty and possibly fear. Begin the session by asking the children:

"Did you ever take a risk and have it turn out badly? It could have been trusting someone who betrayed you in some way, or it could have been some other kind of a risk. Tell us about what happened."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How did you feel before taking the risk and afterward?"

After reviewing, culminate by asking the children:

1. *Sometimes risks turn out badly. Do you think, then, that a person should stop taking them?*
2. *Is someone a coward if they decide not to take a certain risk?*
3. *Even though we may feel uncertain or scared, we sometimes take some risks anyway. Why do you think we do that?*

"How I Show Someone That They Can Trust Me"

Today the children will focus their attention directly on the critical area of *how* people behave when they want someone's trust. As they reflect verbally on their own behavior and listen to others report on theirs, the children may become more capable of seeing the link between their behavior and how they are reacted to by others. For some it may be the first time for them to directly consider the idea that if they want someone to trust them, there may be one or more things they could do to earn that trust. Begin the session by asking the children:

"Think about a time when you wanted someone to trust you. What did you do then, or what would you do differently now if the situation were to happen again? Tell us about it."

If necessary, take your turn first. Throughout the session, discuss how important it is to know that we are trusted by people whose trust we want.

After reviewing, ask the children:

- 1. If you let someone know that you trust them, do you think it might help them to trust you?*
- 2. If you have earned someone's trust, does that trust automatically last for as long as you know them?*

SUPPLEMENTARY ACTIVITIES RELATED TO BUILDING TRUST:

A Trust Walk

This is an outdoor activity, but it is best to begin it in the classroom. At the outset explain to the children that a trust walk is an experience which will provide them with an opportunity to trust and be trusted and to see how they feel in both situations. Then explain all of the procedures to them and answer any questions that they might have before going outside.

Tell them that they will all be going to the playground with you, as a class. When they arrive (at a spot which you designate) they will pair off with another child who they select and the two of them will do the exercise together. For five minutes one child will close his/her eyes while the other leads him/her carefully about the playground. Then they will switch and for another five minutes the one who was "blind" then becomes the leader while the one who was the leader at first is then led about with his/her eyes closed.

In order for the exercise to be effective:

- 1. The person with his/her eyes closed should keep them closed during the entire five minutes with **no peeking**.*
- 2. The leader should make the five minutes without sight as **safe** and as **interesting** as possible for his/her blind partner. He/she may take his/her partner to touch as many different kinds of things as are available, such as grass, playground equipment, fences, other people, and so on.*
- 3. Both partners should remain completely **non-verbal** for the entire ten minutes. (They will have a chance to discuss their experiences and affective reactions after the exercise).*

Tell the children that if any of them don't think that they can follow these guidelines they may watch the exercise with you, as long as they are silent throughout the ten minute observation period. If they decide to participate they are, by so doing, committing themselves to operate according to these guidelines.

Before leaving the classroom a brief demonstration may help the class to understand how to lead another person who has his/her eyes closed. Expect the laughter that will probably result, but stress to the class that the trust walk should be responded to seriously while it is taking place outside.

As soon as you and the class have arrived at your destination on the playground, ask them to select and stand next to their partners. Ask the observers to move to the side and to sit down quietly. Then ask the paired children to decide who will lead first. When everyone is ready signal the children to begin the trust walk. While the children are involved in the activity do not interfere with any part of the process unless your intervention is absolutely necessary.

When the first five minutes are up make a previously agreed-upon arm gesture so that the leaders will know by looking at you that it is time for them to switch roles with their "blind" partners. Without talking to their partners, the leaders should find some way to communicate with them that the time has come for them to switch roles. The second set of leaders should then watch you to see when the second five minute time period is up.

When the entire ten minute period has been completed return together to the classroom. Conduct a discussion with the children by asking them:

1. *How did you feel as the leader?*
2. *How did you feel as you were being led?*
3. *What things may have made it hard or easy for you to trust your partner as he/she led you about?*
4. *What other thoughts and feelings do you have about this experience that you would like to share?*
5. *To the observers: what did you observe that you would like to mention?*

Allow all of the children to respond to the questions, describing their experiences and how they felt.

Make a list of the feeling words that they use in response to questions one and two above on the board, or on a chart.

Discuss how it feels to be blind and how trust in one's partner usually develops gradually in most people. Discuss also such things as how our other senses are usually heightened when one is gone. We become more aware of light and shadow, sounds that we usually don't notice and how things feel to the touch. And people feel like people, regardless of the color of their skin!

Welcoming A New Student

When a new child enrolls in the class, ask the children to be sure to greet him/her. Ask for one or two volunteers to show him/her around the school, and for one or two others to play with him/her during recess for a few days. Show your appreciation to the volunteers. Ask the class to write welcoming letters to the new arrival. (Have them turn them in to you. Then give them to the new child yourself after you have read them.)

Creative Dramatics: Demonstrations of Trustworthy and Non-Trustworthy Behavior

Select four to six children to create and present two dramatic scenes for the class. The first may be done by two or three of the children and should illustrate how people behave which makes it difficult for others to trust them. This scene may then be followed by a drama which illustrates trustworthy behavior, enacted by the other two to three children.

Us And Trust

Ask the group to name the main qualities that a person who is trustworthy has. Make a chart listing the qualities and put it on a bulletin board:

"US AND TRUST"

If I Want You To Trust Me I Must:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

etc. _____

MASTERY

Effective people perceive themselves as being "okay", i.e., they have a healthy degree of self-esteem and a feeling of mastery or self confidence. They try new challenges and do not strongly fear failure. They most likely have experienced success more than failure and probably when they were successful a significant person often noted it and commented on it to them.

It has been widely observed that individuals are more likely to achieve mastery in their endeavors when they have a feeling of mastery about themselves, than they do when they lack self confidence. Generally, it seems as though people who believe in themselves are the ones who continue to succeed and the more they succeed, the more they believe in themselves. Thus, a beneficial cycle is created, giving meaning and joy to the lives of self confident people and they are provided with strength and momentum for tackling the rough times that we all face.

As noted above, other people, and their responses to what we do, play a critical role in whether or not we see ourselves as masterful. If they let us know that they are taking note of our efforts and comment positively to us when we try or succeed, our awareness that we do have energy and capabilities increases. Conversely, without favorable comment we are less aware of our capabilities even if we do try things and experience success. This would explain why so many brilliant, capable people do not regard themselves as such, but rather are painfully aware of their limitations and shortcomings. It would seem as though our culture has many ways of causing us to focus on our weaknesses rather than our assets and abilities.

In the Human Development Program we call belief in oneself a feeling of "I canness" and it is our goal in the mastery sessions to incrementally imbue each child with this feeling in a systematic fashion. In the pre-school through the first grade the mastery activities consist of giving the children a different task in each session which are geared so that success is guaranteed as much as possible. The focus in these sessions, however, is *not* the performance of the task, but the positive commentary of the leader of the session and the peer group, telling the child, "**You can** (hop on one foot)! or **Can you ever** (pour water from a pitcher)!" or words to this effect. These comments are always made immediately *after* the child's successful completion of the task. The key words used are *you can*, which are probably the two most important words a child ever hears. (For that matter, they are important for all of us to hear — no matter how old we are.)

The mastery sessions at the sixth grade level do not involve performance of tasks, but sixth graders can profit from this very same kind of response from you as they perform academically and socially each day at school. As a result of hearing positive commentary about their efforts and receiving the benefits of the circle sessions, the children will have the opportunity to become more aware of their strengths and less debilitated by knowledge of their weaknesses.

For these reasons the mastery sessions are planned and presented in such a way that the children may become more aware of their competencies and other positive qualities. They are given the opportunity to tell each other about things they've seen each other do that they admired and appreciated, and they are urged to tell the group about their own accomplishments and successes. They are also given a chance to deal with some of their feelings of frustration and failure, and in so doing they discover that everyone has these kinds of feelings too, to some degree.

The achievement of success, through a feeling of mastery, or "I Canness" is not the only concern of the Human Development Program. History speaks to us of many individuals who were effective and capable and who found great success in their endeavors. However, there were some who achieved success for themselves at the expense of their fellow man. They exercised their abilities and their powers selfishly and irresponsibly. As in our discussions on Awareness and Social Interaction, this vital factor of responsibility is again stressed. By focusing on their positive behaviors and accomplishments, the children's attention is directed toward the internal and external rewards that can be gained, in terms of human enhancement and appreciation, from these kinds of actions.

The structure of the program, as equitably as possible, attempts to meet the needs of all of the children in the group. Everyone who wants one, gets a turn. Everyone is listened to. Everyone's feelings are accepted. Comparisons and judgments are not made. The circle is *not* another

competitive arena, *but is guided by a spirit of cooperation*. As Bessell¹ puts it:

"The day's fringe lesson — there need be no losers in order to have winners in a group."

It is, therefore, an important component of the program that cooperative wheels be set in motion. It is our belief that when children practice fair, respectful, non-competitive interaction with each other, they will benefit from the experience and will likely employ these responsible behaviors in other life situations.

For these reasons the mastery sessions have been developed to help the children to deal with such matters as improving their own learning habits, taking pride in their endeavors, dealing rationally with disappointments and problems, and making responsible decisions and sticking to them. It is not the aim of the Human Development Program to participate in producing a masterful, but limited, child. Rather we hope to help the children we work with to become responsibly competent.

¹ Bessell, Harold, Ph.D., "The Content is the Medium: The Confidence is the Message," *Psychology Today*, (January, 1968).

UNIT III

MASTERY: SCHOOL

Self-esteem plays a vital role in mental health. A major "occupation" of the children with whom we work is *to learn at school*. School is the site and learning is the primary function. The experiences that children have at school and the evaluations they receive from the school are principle sources from which they evaluate themselves. They conclude that their ability to learn and function at school coincides closely with how worthwhile they are as people. If they feel successful, feelings of self-esteem grow and they are generally willing to continue to be open to new information, to tackle new challenges, and to feel good about continuing to be a student in school.

The objectives of this unit are twofold: (1) to provide children with some increased feelings of worthwhileness, or "I Canness" and, (2) to give them an opportunity to discuss the dynamics involved in learning (and teaching) in a realistic context and to discuss how they feel about school in general.

Often what children do not realize is that everybody experiences some frustration from some aspect of learning. Hardly anybody finds all learning easy. Yet, learning is basic to human existence. Whether we realize it or not, we are always learning something from our surroundings and relating to the world in ways that reflect what we have learned.

The unit begins by giving the children a chance to discuss the feelings they have about school, both positive and negative — an experience which can provide teachers with interesting and valuable information relating to the children's preferences and needs. Then the children, through the next several topics will discuss some of the positive things that have happened to them with respect to learning (and teaching). They will also discuss some of the things that they are learning to do now or have just learned to do. Some of these things may have been enjoyable and some of them may have been difficult. Finally, the unit culminates with two sessions which address the children's feelings about going into the seventh grade, one of the most significant transitions in the lives of the children who will be leaving the elementary school and going to a junior high school. These sessions will give the children an opportunity to speak about the thoughts and feelings that they are probably already experiencing with respect to this imminent transition.

TOPICS ON SCHOOL:

"The Things I Like Most About School"

"The Worst Things About School"

"Something That I Learned Easily"

"I Taught Myself Something"

"I Taught Something To Someone Else"

"Something I Just Learned How To Do"

"Something I'm Learning About Now That Is Enjoyable"

"Something I'm Learning About Now That Is Hard"

"I Could Learn Better If I . . ."

"Positive Feelings That I Have About Going Into The Seventh Grade"

"Negative Feelings That I Have About Going Into The Seventh Grade"

"The Things I Like Most About School"

This unit begins on a positive note. Begin the session by telling the children that in the next several sessions they will be discussing their feelings about school in general and learning in particular. Then tell them:

"Hardly anything is all positive or all negative and that includes school."

Let the children know that tomorrow they will have a chance to discuss the things that bother them about school. (These topics may be discussed in either order, but one should follow the other.)

Begin the participation phase by asking the children:

"What is something that you like about school — something that you have positive feelings about?"

As the children participate, ask:

"How do you generally feel about it (when the class views a film)?"

Concentrate on giving each child the opportunity to express him/herself as fully as possible about one or two things that he/she likes about school, rather than to have them mechanically list specific activities or features of the school environment, without discussing how they feel about them. Be sure to take your turn too.

Following a review, ask the children:

1. *Do you think that children should have to go to school?*
2. *In what ways do you think a session like this is important for teachers as well as for children?*

"The Worst Things About School"

(This session should be led by an adult, rather than a child leader.)

Today the children will have an opportunity to tell about the things that bother them about school.

By introducing this topic and giving them permission to discuss it, you are demonstrating to them that you really do realize that nothing is perfect and ideal — even school. You are letting them know that it is okay for them to view things critically and that it is okay, in this context, to state their negative feelings. In fact, you may even gain some useful information about the children's needs and preferences that may be helpful to you for improving the learning environment. Begin the participation phase by asking them:

"What do you think are the worst things about school? Tell us about at least one thing that you would change if you could?"

As the children participate, ask them:

"How do you feel (when you have to sit quietly)?"

In a number of cases when this topic was being field tested, the children eventually came around to making positive statements about the value of school all by themselves. Of course, this kind of affirmation of school is most likely to occur in children when they do not feel pressured to do so, but rather are given the opportunity to say what they really feel and to listen to the statements their peers make. Be sure to take your turn too.

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *What are some things that you noticed about this session?*

"Something That I Learned Easily"

Today the children will be given an opportunity to tell about a success that they experienced that relates to something that they learned. By telling about something that they learned easily they will be verbally reminding themselves, while they inform the others, that they competently learned something. Begin the session by asking them:

"Think about something that you learned that was easy for you to learn. It may have been some kind of information that you understood and remember, or something that you learned how to do, like some kind of athletic skill, or other. Tell us about it."

As the children participate, ask them:

"When you realized that you were mastering it, how did it make you feel?"

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *What were some of the feelings and accomplishments that you may have noticed that we had in common in this session?*
2. *What do some of the things mentioned suggest to you regarding other things that each of us could learn easily? (Example: a child who learned to play the piano easily could probably succeed with the accordion too).*

"I Taught Myself Something"

In this session the children will consider the idea that learning often happens when people make the personal effort to learn something or to "teach themselves". It is our objective today, to give the children the opportunity to tell about how they taught themselves something (or learned something all by themselves). By discussing such important events as these, the children may at some level consider the idea that the teacher is not responsible for "teaching" them everything that's worth learning. They may also see how they are in a position to influence *their own lives* with respect to the skills and knowledge that they are motivated to achieve.

To start the activity, ask the children:

"Tell us about something that you taught to yourself. It could be anything that you can think of. Maybe you helped yourself to learn how to read, or understand something, or to do an exercise on the cross bar, or how to draw a picture of a certain kind of animal. It could be anything. We would like to know what you taught yourself."

As the children begin to participate, ask:

"How did you feel when you realized that you had taught yourself how to do it?"

"How does it feel now to know that you can teach yourself to do things?"

Discuss how the struggles that we often go through to learn things may not feel good at the time, but that it's worth it very often to keep struggling because the feeling of pride that follows accomplishment is very rewarding.

Following a review, in which the children briefly repeat to one another what they taught themselves and the feeling that they had when they learned how to do the things mentioned, culminate the session by asking:

1. *What is the feeling that most of us seem to have about teaching ourselves something?*
2. *Is it only up to the teacher to teach us everything?*

"I Taught Something To Someone Else"

Once children become aware that they can teach, learning takes on a new perspective. Today the children will think about, and discuss, the possibility of sharing their skills and knowledge with others. For some of the children it may be the first time for them to consider the idea that they know something that they could teach to others. Begin the session by asking them:

"Think about something that you taught to someone, possibly another child who is younger than you are. Maybe you taught them how to play ball, how to write a word in a story that they were writing, how to buckle a belt buckle, or button a button. Or maybe you taught something to someone who is older than you are. You could tell about anything that you taught to someone else. We would like to hear about it."

When you take your turn, you could talk about some specific thing that you particularly like about teaching, or you could tell about something you showed another adult how to do.

As the children begin to participate, ask each one:

"How did you feel when you were teaching (your friend how to do macrame)?"

"How did (your friend) seem to feel when he/she learned how to do it?"

"When (he/she) learned how to do it, how did you feel?"

Following a review, focusing mainly on feelings, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *We know that all of us are learners; is it also possible that all of us are teachers too?*
2. *What are the easy parts, and the hard parts, about being a teacher?*
3. *Sometimes people who are older than we are can learn something from us. Does there ever come a day in people's lives when they can stop learning things because they've already learned enough?*

"Something I Just Learned How To Do"

Sometimes we don't realize how successful we are in learning until we focus directly on our accomplishments and share them with others. Today the children will do just this. Open the session by briefly discussing the concepts that we have been talking about in the circle with respect to our own learning and teaching of others. Then ask the children:

"Think about something that you just recently learned about or something you learned how to do. Tell us what it was."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How did you feel when you first started learning it?"

"How did you feel when you realized that you had learned it?"

Discuss the good feelings that come from mastering a task, and the feelings of frustration that might possibly precede the good ones. Following a review, culminate by asking the children:

1. *What were some of the similarities and differences that you noticed in the things that we said in this session?*

"Something I'm Learning About Now That Is Enjoyable"

It is the objective of this activity to help children focus on the idea that much of the learning that goes on in their lives can be enjoyable and rewarding.

Begin the session by talking together about the various feelings that we have when we are learning how to do something and when we are teaching other people. Tell the children that today we are going to talk about the process of learning itself. Then ask them:

"Think about something that you are learning right now that you like; something that is enjoyable for you. Tell us what it is."

As the children participate, ask them:

"In what way do you find (learning about microscopic life) enjoyable?"

"What are some of the feelings that you get when you are learning about it?"

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *Is it possible that learning can produce good feelings?*
2. *Is all learning fun?*

"Something I'm Learning About Now That Is Hard"

Today's session should follow, "Something I'm Learning Now That Is Enjoyable," because it relates to the other side of the coin. Sometimes learning is difficult. By discussing the things they find difficult, the children will begin to realize that everyone has certain learning problems. Thus, each child realizes that there is nothing strange or bad about him/her if a certain subject area or task does not seem enjoyable or interesting and if they have feelings of frustration. Just about everyone has trouble learning something.

Begin the session by talking about yesterday's activity, in which the children focused on how some areas of learning are enjoyable. Then ask the children:

"Is there something that you are learning about now that, to you, is difficult? If you feel like telling us about it, we would like to hear."

As each child participates, ask:

"How do you feel while you are (taking dictation)?"

Briefly discuss how everyone seems to have their own unique problem area. Following a review, being sure to focus on the feelings that were expressed, culminate the session by asking:

1. *If you have problems learning certain things, are you the only one who has problems with learning something?*
2. *Does it help to learn something when you are interested in it?*

"I Could Learn Better If I . . ."

(This session should be led by an adult, rather than a child leader.)

Today the children will discuss the matter of their own responsibility in the learning process. Begin the session by telling the children about how you found a way to do a better job of learning something that worked for you. Then ask them:

"Think about the ways that you learn best. If you wanted to learn something better that you may have had trouble with, what is something that you could do to help yourself? Tell us about the ideas you have."

As the children participate, ask them:

"If you were to (do your homework at the library) how do you think that would help you?"

Encourage the children to express their ideas fully about how they could improve the learning process for themselves, and to describe in what ways they would make the necessary changes. For many of the children, this will be a "working session", in which they may be dealing with some of these ideas for the first time.

As the teacher, be particularly careful not to tell the students what they should do, but simply listen to their ideas appreciatively and respectfully.

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *Do all of us need to do the very same things to help ourselves learn better?*

"Positive Feelings That I Have About Going Into The Seventh Grade"

(This session should be led by an adult, rather than a child leader)

Going into seventh grade is a big step, especially if it means changing from elementary school to a junior high school. Today's and tomorrow's sessions will provide the children with an opportunity to discuss their feelings about making this step.

Begin the session by discussing with the children where they will be going to school next year. Tell them about the kind of transition you made (or didn't make) when you left sixth grade and entered seventh grade, and how you felt about it, being sure to describe at least one positive feeling. Then ask them:

"What things about seventh grade are you looking forward to? Tell us about the positive feelings that you may have about going into seventh grade."

Let them know that tomorrow they will have a chance to tell about the negative feelings that they might have. As the children respond, ask each one who participates:

"How do you think you will feel about (being able to choose some of your own classes)?"

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *What were some of the similarities and differences that you may have noticed about the things that we had positive feelings about and the kinds of positive feelings that we had?*
2. *Is it okay to have some negative feelings about going into the seventh grade?*

"Negative Feelings That I Have About Going Into The Seventh Grade"

(This session should be led by an adult, rather than a child leader)

Today's session closely follows yesterday's, giving the children a chance to discuss the other side of the coin.

Begin the session by telling the children about one or more of your own negative feelings about going into the seventh grade when you made this transition. (You may wish to balance it by telling about some positive feelings you had too.) Then ask them:

"What are some things that might be bothering you about going into the seventh grade? Perhaps it is something that you think might be difficult or confusing or disagreeable in some way. Tell us about the negative feelings that you might be having about next year."

Often the negative feelings will relate to circumstances that are not known at present. If someone mentions something that they are apprehensive about because they lack information, ask the group:

"Does anyone know (how long the students have to get from one class to another)?"

Urge the children to share the information that they have with each other. Share information that you may have too. If a question that no one can respond to arises, ask someone who volunteers, to take on the responsibility of bringing the information to the group the next day, if possible or appropriate.

Be sure to convey to the children that their apprehensive feelings are natural, normal, and acceptable.

Following a review, culminate by asking the children:

1. *Is there anything wrong with having negative feelings about going into the seventh grade?*
2. *Does it make sense to decide now that being in the seventh grade will be a bummer (will not turn out to be a good experience)?*

SUPPLEMENTARY ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THE IMPROVEMENT OF LEARNING AND TEACHING

Learning As A Cooperative Process

Perform an experiment with the class that demonstrates the effectiveness of learning in a cooperative manner with others as opposed to individual learning in an isolated manner. Begin by asking the children the following riddle at a feasible time in the morning:

"A man goes into a bar and asks for a glass of water, whereupon the bartender reaches under the bar and pulls out a revolver which he points right at the man who requested the water. The man who asked for the water responds to the bartender's action by saying, 'Thank you,' and leaves the bar. What is happening in this situation? Why did the bartender do this?"

(The answer to the riddle is: *"The man who requested the glass of water had the hiccups."*)

Explain to the children that according to the rules of the experiment they should try to come up with the answer to the riddle *all by themselves* in three hours. At the end of the three hours the whole class will work on the riddle together until they come up with the answer through a process of cooperation. Emphasize to the children that during the three hour period for individual thinking they should not discuss the riddle with anyone in order for the experiment to work. *Add that if they already know the answer to this riddle they should keep it a secret.*

The second part of the experiment begins three hours later. Allow about 30 minutes for this phase which will be comprised of a question and answer period and a follow-up discussion. Tell the children that you will now answer any questions that they have about the riddle as a computer would answer them. You will either respond with "yes" or "no" to their questions and to irrelevant questions you will respond, "doesn't compute". Point out to them that a good question to ask to get at the answer is, *"Is it helpful to know . . . (where this happened?", for example)*. **Ask the children who have prior knowledge of the answer to disqualify themselves and to keep from participating in the question and answer period.** Eventually through this process someone will get the answer to the riddle. As soon as this happens ask the child who gets the answer,

"How did you figure it out?"

Invariably the child will respond by acknowledging the progress made toward ascertaining the solution by his/her peers. They asked questions and received answers while he/she listened. That sparked his/her mind to the next logical deduction.

Then ask the class:

"What did you learn from this experiment?"

If necessary, point out to the children that in three hours they individually struggled with the riddle in their minds without getting the answer, and in (15-30 minutes) someone got it through the process of pooling knowledge that occurred in the question and answer period. Add that many other children would probably have gotten it too in just a few more minutes as they listened and thought.

Other riddles may also be shared following this procedure on subsequent days.

Make use of other cooperative learning experiences with the class, such as dividing them into small groups for researching information that relates to a total class area of interest. Each group then reports the information they have gained to the class with the use of devices such as charts, dramas, illustrations, etc., that they have created. In this way each child benefits from exposure to all of the information gained, while personally involved in the direct acquisition of only a portion of it.

Teaching Teams And Consultants

Allow a number of children to pair off and form "teaching teams", in which a child who is proficient in one subject area, such as math, teams up with another who is proficient in another subject area, such as spelling. The two may assist one another when the class is given periods for "working together".

"Consultants" are also a good idea if all of the children are given the chance to be a consultant at one time or another in some kind of school activity.

Teaching Younger Children

"Consultants" may also be sent to the kindergarten and primary classes for periods of time to help the younger children with direct learning experiences and/or follow-up learning assignments. Before children are dispatched discuss the importance of respect to the learner when one is teaching something to someone else.

Familiarize the children with the very effective teaching strategy called the "three period lesson" which was developed by Dr. Maria Montessori. This method specifies three essential steps of gradual learning as follows:

First the learner is presented with a small number of concepts to be learned in a verbal fashion. ("This one is red. This one is blue. This one is orange.")

Secondly, the learner is asked to discriminate non-verbally between the concepts. (*"Put your finger on the blue one. Put your finger on the orange one. Put your finger on the red one."*)

In the third period the learner is asked to make a discriminating verbal response: (Teacher: *"What color is this one?"* Learner: *"It's blue."* Teacher: *"What color is this one?"* Learner: *"It's red."* Teacher: *"What color is this one?"* Learner: *"It's orange."*)

Emphasize the importance of proceeding through these steps to the "teachers" so that they will not request the learners to perform at any level until they have been prepared to do so. Whenever a learner makes an error at the second or third level the instructional procedure should be begun again at the step preceding it. The "teachers" may practice the method with each other before working with younger children, using vocabulary at their own educational level. (This method is very valuable in the acquisition of various parts of speech, especially when learning a second language.)

Creative Writing And Illustrating:

Something That I Learned, Away From School, That I Can Teach To You

All of the children with whom we work learn many things away from school. They may be taking horseback riding lessons; they may have learned a foreign language that was spoken in their home before they learned to speak English; or they may have learned how to do a good job of watering the flowerbed without knocking over the flowers or eroding the soil. Every child has learned something that he/she can share with the class.

Ask the children to write a short story, telling about something that they learned how to do, that they didn't learn in school. As necessary, make minimal suggestions to them about the kinds of things that they could tell about. Ask them to illustrate their stories also, making pictures of themselves doing the things they learned how to do.

When the stories and pictures are completed, ask the children to share what they have written and drawn with the rest of the class. As the children make their reports, find a way to help each one teach the class about the thing that he/she reports on. For example, use a jump rope to help the child who has taken horseback riding lessons to show the class how the reins should be held. Ask the child, who speaks a language other than English at home to teach the class how to say something in the other language, and ask the child who has learned how to water flowers effectively, to describe what others will need to know in order for them to be able to do it themselves. Point out to the children that: (1) each one of us is capable of learning many things, (2) that all learning does not go on in school, and (3) that each one of us is capable of teaching the things that we know to others.

Allowing Children To Get Involved In The Teaching Process

Frequently ask the children as you begin to present subject matter to them:

"What are some of the ways that you can think of that would make learning this more interesting to you?"

Then follow suggestions that are feasible. In this way, you are allowing the children to take some responsibility in the manner in which subject matter will be presented to them. You are also demonstrating that you are still learning about teaching and willing to learn from your students. You are letting them know that you believe that their ideas are good ones and that you genuinely respect them.

Bridging The Gap

Arrange for a counselor to seventh graders and some seventh graders in the junior high school to which the sixth graders in your class will be going, to visit the class to tell the children about junior high and to answer their questions.

UNIT IV

SOCIAL INTERACTION: COMMUNICATING

Learning how to communicate effectively with others is probably the most critical element in social interaction. Communication involves two major components — being able to express one's thoughts and feelings and being able to listen to the thoughts and feelings of others. In short, communication involves "give and take". While this is rather obvious to most people, the ability to consistently practice communication that equitably involves *both* "give and take" with others is not acquired as a trait. We are not naturally endowed with this ability. It is a skill that we have to *learn and practice* and no matter how proficient we may have become, we can always improve.

With respect to the children with whom we work, some may lack practice at communicating because they are reticent to speak. This might be because they have not been positively reinforced to any appreciable degree for verbalizing in the past. Others find it extremely difficult to listen to someone else while the other person is speaking. Many have difficulties with both functions. When effective two-way communication is inhibited for whatever reason, negative feelings often arise leading to more reticence to speak, or more reluctance to listen, depending on the circumstance of the situation. In these cases the relationships of the people involved generally deteriorate. On the other hand, when individuals are aware of *how* to express themselves and *how* to listen and actively practice *both* of these skills, the relationships between these people generally become increasingly more mutually satisfying. In the latter case, more information is transmitted and more good feeling between the individuals becomes noticeable.

Besides its content, the Human Development Program offers a process for circle members to practice daily so that they might become more proficient at communicating effectively. Both verbal expression and active and reflective listening are emphasized as being desirable in each circle session and are positively reinforced on a systematic basis because these are vital concepts, integral to the program and to the everyday social interactions of the children.

In this unit the children will focus on communication via both process and content. It has been prepared in order to offer them additional experiences in this vital realm. By discussing the topics they will have an opportunity to become even more aware of what constitutes healthy and beneficial communication, how important it is to know how to communicate well, and how problems in communication arise and might possibly be solved. First they will respond to the question, "What is good communication?" Then they will discuss the necessary primary ingredient, attention, in communicating. They will discuss how they feel when someone listens to them and when someone doesn't; how at times it is okay, and at other times it isn't okay to tell their feelings; how they accepted someone else's feelings; what happens when misunderstandings occur; and how sometimes people can communicate non-verbally. Finally, the children will focus on specific listening behaviors that indicate interest in what a person who is speaking has to say.

TOPICS ON COMMUNICATING

"What Is Good Communication?"

"How I Got Somebody To Pay Attention To Me"

"How Somebody Got Me To Give Him/Her Attention"

"A Time When Someone Listened Well To Me"

"A Time When I Listened Well To Someone"

"Once When Someone Wouldn't Listen To Me"

"A Time When It Was Okay To Tell My Feelings"

"A Time When I Accepted Someone Else's Feelings"

"A Time When It Wasn't Okay To Tell My Feelings"

"A Time When I Was Involved In A Misunderstanding"

"A Time When We Communicated Without Words"

"How I Let Others Know That I Am Interested In What They Say"

"What Is Good Communication?"

Today the children will begin this new unit by thinking about what constitutes effective communication. They will simply be asked for their opinion in this session in order for them to give their attention to this area in a very fundamental way. The statements that are made will also set the tone for the unit and serve as a reminder to the children of their own standards for the kinds of interactions that they appreciate.

Begin the session by discussing as a group how so many things that we do in life involve communication. For example, our circle sessions depend completely on our abilities to communicate and the better we are able to do it the more enjoyable the sessions are. Then ask the children:

"What is good communication? What are the things that people must do in order to communicate well with one another? We would like to know what you think."

As the children participate, ask them:

"Could you give us an example of what you mean?"

Encourage each child to express his/her opinion as fully as possible on one or possibly two points, rather than to state several criteria for effective communication in a rapid-fire manner. By asking them for an example of what they mean, it is likely that a number of them will elaborate, even relating relevant personal experiences that engendered positive or negative feelings in them or someone else.

Review the session by focusing on the feelings that were shared as well as the opinions that were stated. Culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *What are generally the results of good communication?*
2. *What are generally the results of poor communication?*
3. *What do you think it means to "be able to give and take"?*

"How I Got Somebody To Pay Attention To Me"

The first two topics in this unit will concentrate on the important issue of people paying attention to one another as the primary ingredient in communication. The purpose of these two activities is to show the universality and legitimacy of the need for attention. Because it is so fundamental, there must be an almost unlimited number of ways to get this need met, ranging from the most elegant styles to the poorest possible form. For example, you can get attention by being funny, informative, dramatic, helpful, disruptive, destructive, ineffective, and so on. Another objective of these sessions will be to help the children focus on which ways are the most socially responsible. Begin the session by asking them:

"Think about a time when you wanted someone to pay attention to you. Tell us about what you did to get their attention."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How did the person seem to feel about the way that you chose to get his/her attention?"

"What kind of attention did you get?"

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

- 1. What were some of the ways, that were mentioned in the session, for getting someone's attention that didn't get the person mad at us?*
- 2. Is there anybody who doesn't ever need attention from someone else?*

"How Somebody Got Me To Give Him/Her Attention"

The purpose of today's activity is essentially the same as yesterday's. This time, it is approached from the other vantage point. Begin the session by asking the children:

"Think about a time when someone wanted your attention. What did he/she do to get it?"

As the children participate, ask them:

"How did you feel about the way the person got your attention?"

"Did you feel like continuing to give attention to the person?"

"If you didn't, was it because of the way that they got your attention in the first place?"

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

- 1. What were some of the ways, that were mentioned in this session, that someone used to get attention from us that didn't make us mad at him/her?*

"A Time When Someone Listened Well To Me"

Today the children will begin focusing on the critical element of listening in effective communication. By recalling, and telling about, a time when someone listened well to them, the children will begin to connect the idea of good listening with the positive feelings that result in the person who was listened to. Begin the session by briefly discussing how we are finding out as we participate in circle sessions, that listening is a must if we want to have good sessions. Then ask them:

"Think about a time when you weren't in a circle session, but you were somewhere else, and you needed, or wanted, to have someone listen to you very much, and they did listen well to you. Tell us about the situation and how it made you feel to be listened to."

As the children participate, ask them:

"Did you feel that the person who listened well to you, wanted you to be there?"

"Was it easy for you to explain what was on your mind as they listened to you?"

"How did you feel at the time?"

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *How important do you think it is for people to listen to one another when they are talking to each other?*

"A Time When I Listened Well To Someone"

Today the children will have an opportunity to tell about a time when they listened effectively to another person. By describing their positive behavior, and taking deserved credit for it, the behavior is likely to be reinforced. Begin the session by discussing briefly with the children how we are learning to listen in the circle and how important it is that we learn to listen well. Then ask them:

"Think about a time when you were having a conversation with somebody and they were telling you something, and you know that you were doing a good job of listening as they talked. Tell us about it."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How did the person seem to feel when you listened well to what he/she was saying?"

"How do you feel about yourself now as you realize that you are able to be a good listener?"

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *How much does it affect another person's feelings if you listen to him/her?*
2. *What are some of the ways that people show that they are listening?*

"Once When Someone Wouldn't Listen To Me"

Today the children will continue to focus their attention on the important element of listening respectfully to one another. In this session they will tell about a time when someone wouldn't listen to them when they needed to be listened to. Begin the session by asking them:

"Did you ever need to have someone listen to you very much, but they wouldn't do it? Tell us about the situation, without telling us who the person was, and how you felt at the time."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How did you feel about the person who wouldn't listen to you?"

"While you are trying to talk and someone won't listen to you, how do you feel about yourself?"

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *What are some of the feelings that we get when we want someone to listen to us and they won't do it?*

"A Time When It Was Okay To Tell My Feelings"

Today the children will focus on the positive feelings that they get when they are able to talk to someone about their emotions and their feelings are accepted. Another objective is for them to think

about how they make others feel when they listen to and accept the feelings of other people. Begin the session by asking the children:

"Think about a time when you wanted to tell someone how you felt about something, and it was okay for you to do it. Tell us about the situation and how you felt when you found out that it was okay."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How did the person let you know that it was okay for you to tell him/her how you were feeling?"

"How did you feel toward him/her?"

"How did you feel about yourself while the person listened to and accepted your feelings?"

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *If someone accepts your feelings, are they accepting you as a person?*

"A Time When I Accepted Someone Else's Feelings"

Today the children will have an opportunity to tell how they listened to someone who was expressing their feelings and how they accepted the feelings that the person expressed. By telling about a time when they accepted someone in this manner, they are given the opportunity to increase their awareness that they are capable of behaving in this way when and if they choose to. Begin the session by asking them:

"Yesterday we told about a time when someone accepted the feelings that we were expressing. Have you ever been the one who listened to someone when they were telling about their feelings and you accepted what they were saying, without telling them not to feel that way? Tell us about it."

As the children relate their experiences, ask them:

1. *How did you show the person that it was okay for him/her to tell you the feelings he/she had?*
2. *How did it seem to affect the person for you to be accepting of his/her feelings?*

Following a review in which the way in which each child showed the other person that it was okay for him/her to tell his/her feelings, is focused upon, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *If you accept someone's feelings, are you accepting him/her as a person?*

"A Time When It Wasn't Okay To Tell My Feelings"

We all face times when it is best for us to keep from telling others how we are feeling. This session may serve as a vehicle for the children to discuss the fact that just because it's okay to tell their feelings in the circle session and in some other situations, the reality is that this is not true in all situations. Begin the session by briefly discussing this idea with the children and then ask them:

"Can you think of a time when you were having some feelings and possibly you wanted to tell someone about them, but you knew that it wouldn't be a good idea. It may have been because you thought the person, or people, would not accept your feelings, or because it would have been inappropriate (like trying to talk to a

person when they are talking to someone else on the telephone). Without telling us who the people in your story are, tell us something about the situation and how you felt."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How did you feel when you had to keep your feelings inside?"

"What do you think it was about the situation that made it inappropriate for you to tell your feelings?"

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *Is it a good idea for people to tell their feelings whenever they want to, in any situation?*
2. *How do you know whether or not it's going to be okay to tell your feelings?*
3. *What are some ways to find out?*

"A Time When I Was Involved In A Misunderstanding"

Misunderstandings between people are inevitable. However, the better we learn to communicate with one another, the fewer misunderstandings we have. By telling about a time when they misunderstood what someone said, or when someone misunderstood what they said, the children will become even more familiar with the components of positive communication skills, particularly careful listening. Begin the session by discussing with the children what a misunderstanding is. Then ask them:

"Think about a time when someone said something to you, but for whatever reason, you did not understand what he/she was saying or maybe you said something to someone but he/she didn't understand what you meant. Tell us about the misunderstanding and how you felt."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How did the other person seem to feel when the misunderstanding took place?"

"If you cleared up the misunderstanding, how did you do it?"

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children?

1. *Can all misunderstandings be completely avoided?*
2. *When you realize that you have misunderstood someone, what is one thing that you could do to help clear up the problem?*
3. *What could you do about it when it appears that someone has misunderstood what you have said?*

"A Time When We Communicated Without Words"

When we stop and think about it, it is surprising how many things, especially feelings, we can communicate to someone without the use of words. Often non-verbal communication can be a very positive experience. Such emotions as love, for example, need more than verbalization to be fully expressed. By the same token, negative sentiment can be readily transmitted through facial expression, gesture, and so on. Effective listening, therefore, requires more than simple attention to words. Briefly discuss these ideas with the children and then ask them:

"Think about a time when, for some reason, you couldn't talk with someone out loud so the two of you communicated with each other without words. You may

have communicated your feelings to each other and maybe you even communicated some kind of a message. Tell us about what happened."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How were you feeling at the time?"

"How did the other person seem to be feeling?"

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *How many different ways did we communicate without words?*
2. *If it is possible to communicate without words, why don't we do it all the time?*

"How I Let Others Know That I Am Interested In What They Say"

Today the children will focus on people's *behaviors* when they are conversing that show, "I am interested in what you are saying." Begin the session by briefly discussing with the children how such things as body posture, the way we look into someone's eyes, the facial expressions that we make, and so on, give messages to the people with whom we are talking that tell them whether or not we want to listen to them. Then ask the children:

"When someone is talking to you and you are interested in what they are saying, what specific things do you do? Tell us what they are."

As the children participate, ask them:

"When someone does that to you (leans forward, looks at you, doesn't interrupt you, and so on) how does it make you feel?"

Discuss together the idea that we *can* listen without leaning forward, without looking into the speaker's eyes, and maybe even if we interrupt sometimes, but when we do these things the speaker might not *know* that we are listening. If we do lean forward, establish eye contact, keep from interrupting and so on, then they will be *certain* that we are interested and that we are listening.

Discuss also how sometimes people do these things when they aren't really listening, but want the speaker to think they are. People can tell when someone is really listening, or faking, in most cases. The phony listener is usually only fooling him/herself and no one else.

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *Let's try to remember the things that we can do to let people know that we are interested in what they are saying.*
2. *Why do you think we review what each person who spoke in each circle session, said?*

SUPPLEMENTARY ACTIVITIES RELATED TO COMMUNICATING:

Discerning Messages — A Total Class Activity

Begin this exercise by asking three pairs of children (six in all) to read three scripts to the class at given signals during the activity. Give them copies of the scripts, (Dialogues I, II, and III below, which are provided in Appendix E) and allow them some time to rehearse before the activity begins.

Initiate the activity with the class by briefly discussing with the children how people sometimes say things in a more complicated way than is necessary. Very often communication breaks down when messages are not stated openly in a simple form because the one who receives the message does not know what the sender is really trying to say and responds to what the message "seems to be". To demonstrate, ask the first pair of students to read the following dialogue to the class:

Dialogue I

(The characters: two children aged nine or above)

Person 1: Boy, are the tests the teacher gives ever hard. I have more trouble with them.

Person 2: Yeah. They're pretty hard all right.

1: Well, you've been doing okay on all of the tests. In fact, you've done very well. You must know how to study for them lots better than I do. I just don't know how to study very well.

2: Oh.

1: Yeah. I'll bet you could show other people how to study for those tests if you wanted to. I sure wish I knew how.

2: Hmmm. I never thought of that.

1: Yeah. I'll bet you could be a big help to somebody who is having trouble . . . somebody like me.

2: Don't worry. All you have to do is concentrate and you'll do better on the tests.

Ask the class:

What do you think (person 1's) real message to (person 2) was?

A. "You sure are smart."

B. "I can't stand tests!"

C. "Please help me study for the test."

Of course, (person 1) is complimenting (person 2) and he/she obviously doesn't feel very good about the tests, but it is most likely that he/she is really asking for help in a "roundabout" way (C). Discuss these ideas with the children, and ask them:

1. Did (person 2) get the message? Why or why not?

2. Why do you think (person 1) didn't say his/her real message directly to (person 2)?

3. Let's assume for a moment that (person 2) did understand (person 1's) real message, even though it was unclear. What are some things that he/she could have said?

Discuss the possible responses (person 2) could have made. Maybe he/she did not want to help (person 1), in which case he/she might tell this to (person 1). On the other hand, it is possible that (person 2) would have been pleased to help (person 1) if he/she had understood that that's what (person 1) wanted. Because of poor communication an opportunity may have been missed.

Dialogue II

(The characters: two children aged nine or above)

Person 1: What are you going to do this afternoon when school gets out?

Person 2: Oh, I don't know . . . maybe I'll go over to the park.

- 1: *Oh! . . . Gee. I don't have anything to do today after school.*
 2: *Oh.*
 1: *I sure wish I did.*
 2: *Oh.*
 1: *I don't have anybody to do anything with.*
 2: *Oh.*
 1: *I sure wish I did . . . You're going over to the park?*
 2: *Maybe.*
 1: *Oh. Do you have anybody to go with?*
 2: *No.*
 1: *Gee. I sure do like it over at the park.*
 2: *Oh, you do?*
 1: *Yeah. I just love it there.*
 2: *Oh.*

Ask the class:

What do you think (person 1's) real message to (person 2) was?

- A. *"The park is a very nice place."*
- B. *"Could I spend the afternoon with you?"*
- C. *"What are you going to do this afternoon?"*

(Person 1) does like the park and may be curious to some extent about (person 2's) plans for the afternoon, but it is most likely that what (person 1) really wants is an invitation from (person 2) to spend the afternoon with him/her (B). Again, the message is hidden and indirect.

Discuss these ideas with the children, and ask them:

1. *Did (person 2) get (person 1's) real message? Why or why not?*
2. *What do you think the reason may have been for (person 1) to speak in such a "round-about" way?*
3. *Let's assume for a moment that (person 2) did finally realize during the conversation what it was that (person 1) wanted. What are some things that (person 2) could have said?*

Discuss how another opportunity may have been missed for both people because (person 2) did not get (person 1's) real message. Of course, it is possible that (person 2) would not have wanted to spend the afternoon with (person 1). Discuss as a class how (person 2) could have responsibly responded if this was the case. The main point in this exercise is, however, that (person 1) will never know whether or not (person 2) would have enjoyed getting together for the afternoon because he/she never did give a direct message.

Dialogue III

The characters: two children, one aged 13 (person 1) who is taking care of a four year old (person 2) for a short while.

- Person 1: *Hi, come in. I'll take care of you, okay? We can play something together.*
 Person 2: *Can I play with that toy truck?*
 1: *Sure.*
 2: *What if I break it?*

- 1: *You can't break it. It's made of steel. See?*
- 2: *What would you do if I broke a window while I'm here?*
- 1: *Gee, I don't know. Do you want me to read you a story?*
- 2: *Do you ever get mad at little kids?*
- 1: *Oh, well, I guess that would depend . . .*
- 2: *Do you think you're going to get mad at me?*
- 1: *I don't know. I . . .*
- 2: *Do you ever tease little kids or play mean tricks on them?*
- 1: *What's the matter with you? Come on in, okay?*
- 2: *Well. . . okay.*

Ask the class:

What do you think (person 2's) real message to (person 1) was?

- A. *"I don't want you to read me a story."*
- B. *"I like to break things."*
- C. *"Will I be safe here?"*

The small child was not interested at that moment in hearing a story. He/she was concerned about what might happen if he/she broke something, but this was probably not because the child likes breaking things. Rather, he/she was concerned about what would happen to him/her if something got broken. The child wanted to know what kind of a person the babysitter is and how he/she will be treated by the babysitter. The child was probably checking to see if it is a safe place (C).

Discuss these ideas with the children, and ask them:

1. *Did the babysitter get the four year old's message? Why or why not?*
2. *Why do you think the four year old gave such a complex message?*
3. *If you had been the babysitter and you had figured out the message, what is something that you could have said to the child to let him/her know that he/she will be safe with you?*

Discuss how frequently people, including children, do speak in unnecessarily complex ways. Suggest to the children that when someone is saying something that is unclear to them, they could ask such questions as:

1. *What do you want me to understand?*
2. *What do you want me to do?*
3. *Is this your message, _____ ?*

The children themselves can use this same procedure with themselves. Suggest to them that when they are having trouble expressing themselves they could stop talking, ask themselves what their message is and how they feel about it, and then begin the message again if they decide to.

A Communication Exercise: "I — You Messages"

This is an important exercise that relates to communicating and to responsible handling of potential or actual conflict situations. Do it now as your class focuses their attention on ways to communicate and again when they embark on Unit X, the critical, final unit in this guide that relates to conflict resolution.

Begin the exercise by telling the class that you are going to speak to them two times about the same subject and for them to listen carefully and to "tune-in to themselves" to see how they feel as they hear the two messages.¹ Then say to the children something to this effect, being very careful to begin each sentence with the word, **you**:

"You children have been dropping papers all over the floor lately. You do it again and again. You don't listen when I ask you not to. You really make me feel bad."

Then tell the children that you have just said the first message. Then say something to this effect, being very careful to begin each sentence with the word, **I**:

"I've been noticing a lot of paper on the floor lately. I think it makes our classroom look messy. I've mentioned this before, but there is still paper on the floor. I feel bad about it."

Then ask the children:

"Both of my messages to you were about the same thing — paper on the floor — but did you feel the very same way when I said both messages?"

"How did you feel when I gave the first message?"

"How did you feel when I gave the second message?"

"What was the main difference between the two messages?"

Discuss the possible differences with the children until someone says that the difference had to do with the words **you** and **I**. If the children have a difficult time telling what the difference was between the two messages, repeat them again. Help them to "zero-in" on what the differences are by telling them that there is one word that you use a lot in the first message and another word that you use a lot in the second message.

When the children have come up with the answer, discuss together how amazing, but true, it is that when we deliver a message to someone with the word, "I" instead of "you" it's a completely different message. It is straightforward, honest and easily respected. By contrast, a "you" message is like an accusation. It puts people on the defensive and they are ready to fight. Very often we get into unpleasant conflicts that are unnecessary just because we delivered a "you" message when we could just as easily have delivered an "I" message, or someone delivered a "you" message to us, instead of an "I" message.

Make sure that all of the children understand. Write "I — You Messages" on the board and as a class, construct a brief "you" message and write it on the board so that everyone can see as well as hear how the message is constructed. Then turn the "you" message into an "I" message and write it on the board too.

To give the children a chance to personally experience delivering "you" and "I" messages so that they can feel the difference, ask them to pair off with each other and form dyads. As soon as the dyads are formed ask them to decide in the dyad who will be A and who will be B. Then tell the children that they should imagine that B just tore a page in a book that he/she was borrowing from A that is A's personal property and very important to A. For one minute A will deliver a "you" message to B about what he/she did. (B should just listen.) At the end of the minute stop the children and then tell A to deliver an "I" message to B about the torn page. At the end of the second minute stop the children and ask them to listen carefully as you give them directions for the second part of the exercise. Repeat this same procedure, but this time B will talk to A twice about taking cuts in front of him/her in the lunch line. The first time B will deliver a "you" message, and the second time he/she will deliver an "I" message. (A should just listen.)

¹ The messages do not have to be about paper on the floor. Perhaps that is not an issue in your classroom. The two messages could be about anything, just so it is about some kind of problem that the class has to deal with occasionally and one of the messages is a "you" message and the other is an "I" message about the same subject.

As the children undertake this exercise, the room will become very noisy when the "you" messages are being delivered, because the very nature of the message causes the one who is delivering it to become loud and "heated up."

Culminate the exercise by asking the children:

"How did you feel when you were delivering the "you" message?"

"How did you feel when you were delivering the "I" message?"

"Which kind of message is easiest to deliver?"

"How did you feel when the "you" message was being delivered to you?"

"How did you feel when the "I" message was being delivered to you?"

"Which kind of message is easiest to listen to?"

"What did you learn from doing this exercise?"

An Exercise For Sharpening Listening Skills

By way of role playing, demonstrate (1) positive, or active, and (2) non-helpful listening behaviors for the class with the aid of another adult, or a child, who understands the purpose of the demonstration and who is very secure.

First demonstrate poor listening behaviors by having the person helping you try to tell you something while you employ all the non-listening behaviors that you can. Then ask the person who role-played the part of the speaker, *"How do you feel?"* (Even though it is a role play situation, the person is likely to have some very real negative feelings.) After he/she has had a chance to tell about his/her feelings, ask the class to name the *behaviors* that they saw you, the "listener", do and write them on the board. For example, a list on non-listening behaviors might include:

- didn't look into speaker's eyes
- interrupted
- had bored expression
- turned body away from speaker
- laughed inappropriately
- looked at watch

Repeat the demonstration, this time demonstrating active listening. Before asking the children to name the behaviors, ask the speaker how he/she feels this time. Then make the list of active listening *behaviors*, that the children saw in this demonstration. It will probably include such actions as:

- turned body toward speaker
- looked into speaker's eyes
- did not interrupt
- had interested expression
- smiled

Following the demonstrations, ask the children to pick partners and pair off into dyads. Explain to them that they will be doing a listening exercise in the next ten minutes and that you will give them signals and directions for how to proceed. Then direct them through the following stages:

First decide who will be A and who will be B. Then for two minutes, beginning at the signal, A will talk to B, telling B anything that he/she would like to

say. During this time, B will do all the non-listening behaviors that he/she can think of. At the signal ending the two minutes, a one minute period will begin. During this minute, *B will listen* as A tells him/her how he/she feels about what just happened. Then, at the signal, for two minutes A will tell B the same thing, or something else, and this time *B will actively listen* to A.

In the second five minutes of the exercise, the partners will reverse roles. B will talk to A, who in the first two minutes will not listen. Then B will tell A about his/her feelings for one minute. Then B will tell A the same story, or something else, for two minutes and this time A will listen.

An automatic timer will be helpful for signaling the end of time periods for this exercise. When the partners are not listening to each other (four of the ten minutes) the noise level in the room will increase to an amazing degree because they will be trying to get the listener's attention and they will be discharging their frustration almost always by laughing. When the entire exercise has been completed, conduct a class discussion, asking the following questions:

"How did you feel when your partner wouldn't listen to you?"

"How did you feel when your partner did listen?"

"How did you feel when you were not listening to your partner?"

"How did you feel when you did listen to him/her?"

"Were you aware of the changes in the noise level in the room during different parts of the exercise? What were they? What made it so noisy at times?"

"What are some things that you may have learned from the demonstrations and from doing this exercise?"

Writing Dialogue For Cartoons

Allow the children to create communication for characters in a cartoon sequence. Any comic strip which depicts two or more characters who are communicating with each other will do. There are two ways to proceed with the preparations:

1. *A duplicating (or ditto) process.* Trace the cartoon sequence first on the paper portion of a duplicator master at a light table or against a window. Then go over the lines again to make the impression on the master so that it can be reproduced. As you do this, make the balloons (that contain the words spoken by each cartoon character) as large as possible and leave them empty. Duplicate the number of copies needed so that each child in the class will have one.
2. *A xeroxing process.* Wipe out all of the balloons (that contain the words spoken by each cartoon character) with liquid paper. Then draw in larger balloons and leave them empty. Xerox the number of copies needed.

When you pass the cartoons out to the children, ask them to look at the pictures carefully and then decide what they think the characters in the cartoon might be saying to each other. Ask them to fill in the balloons in a way that would make sense to them, using the pictures to provide clues regarding the feelings of the characters and the situation. When they have completed the task the children may share and discuss their cartoons with each other in small groups of three or four, without evaluating them. Emphasize the point to the class that whatever someone wrote is "right". Each child will uniquely perceive and create. It will be interesting to see the similarities and differences among class members.

UNIT V

AWARENESS: IDENTITY/PRESENT AND FUTURE

While all of the unit themes and individual topics in this activity guide are designed, in part, to enhance each child's self-knowledge, this matter is important enough to focus on directly. Hence, this unit on identity has been added to this guide.

Everyone searches in their own way for the answer to the question, "Who am I?" There is more to answering this question than what may appear to be a correct response on the surface. To attempt to find the answer each person needs to be in touch with him/herself in terms of outward manifestations such as physical and personality characteristics and cultural influences. We also need to keep in touch with ourselves on the inside by asking ourselves questions, such as: "How do I like to express myself?", "What do I do well?", "How do I react to things?", "What do I value?", "How am I feeling?", and "What kind of person am I becoming?"

Answering questions like these may help an individual to know him/herself at any one time, but all of these factors, as well as outward conditions, are always in a state of flux. Identity, therefore, is never static. The dimension of time causes our identities to actually change from one moment to the next as we grow and develop and respond to a changing world.

An important aspect in the development of identity in children (and for humans of all age groups) refers to this latter factor. Not everyone agrees on how much a person's behavior is determined, or how much they should let it be determined, by the demands of the environment. But probably most people do agree that to some extent everyone is who they are, because of what they *have* to be and do in the world in order to survive and grow physically, socially and psychologically. Therefore, the matter of how we all change from situation to situation and how this can be appropriate at times and self depreciating at others, is brought to the attention of the children in this unit. A child's sense of identity, or, "who I am", may not correspond to the role that he/she is expected to play by some individual, or group. This relates to a variety of factors in a variety of settings. A primary example is the expectations generally placed on children because of their sex. For this reason, topics that relate to this issue are presented for the children to discuss.

These sessions are preceded by a series of topics referring to the wishes and fantasies of children with respect to their identities and a closer look at themselves with respect to their cultural backgrounds and their changing physical and personality characteristics, preferences, perceptions and needs. Other topics are devoted to increasing the children's awareness of some of their strong points and likeable qualities. The children will also discuss what life will be like when they become teenagers. They will talk about the things they think they will like, what their hopes are, the problems they might encounter, and what kind of people they want to become as teenagers.

The overall purpose of this unit, then, is not to try to supply the complete answer to the question, "Who am I?", but to help each child strengthen his/her own sense of identity in a positive context in the here-and-now and in the future. It is also presented to help them understand what some of the factors are that influence their changing selves and how each life situation, like each person, is unique and should be responded to by way of conscious decisions. It is, therefore, our objective to aid children in developing a sense of identity as a person who makes aware, rational choices.

Topics On Identity

"If I Were An Animal"

"If I Could Wear Anything I Wanted"

"A Person I'd Like To Be Like"

"I 'See' Things In My Own Way"

"I 'See' Things In My Own Way" (Continued)

"Something I Like About You"

"How Do I Look?"

"Who Am I Culturally?"

"A Group I Like Belonging To"

"Something About Me That Changed From A Year Ago"

"How I Can Change From One Situation To Another"

"How I Changed To Please Someone (Or Some Group) But I Didn't Like That Me"

"Something I Didn't Do Because As A (Boy Or Girl) I 'Shouldn't' Have"

"A Time When I Did Something That People Of My Sex 'Shouldn't' Do"

"How I Would Like To Be Known By Others"

"Something I Think I'll Like About Being A Teenager"

"When I'm A Teenager, I Hope . . ."

"A Problem I Might Have When I'm A Teenager"

"The Kind Of Person I Want To Be When I'm A Teenager"

"If I Were An Animal"

Today the children will use their ability to fantasize by making a choice about their identities. Although the concept may at first be startling, most people enjoy imagining what it would be like not to be human at all, but to be the animal of *their choice* and to tell about how they decided what animal they would be. Through this kind of expression, the teller and listeners are in a unique mind-frame that together they all understand. Enjoyment, and possibly insight, comes from this experience of vivid self-expression.

Begin the session by asking the children:

*"If you were not a person, but some animal, what animal would you like to be?
Tell us what you think it would be like to be the animal of your choice."*

As the children participate, ask them such questions as:

"How did you decide what animal you would be?"

"How would it feel?"

"How would you spend your time?"

"What would be the best thing about it?"

"When you see a (horse) what kind of feelings do you get?"

Following a review, culminate by asking the children:

1. *What similarities and differences did you notice in the animals we named and the feelings we expressed in this session?*

"If I Could Wear Anything I Wanted"

(This topic should be led by an adult, rather than a child leader.)

Most children are not in a position to have a complete say in what clothes they have access to. So, continuing with the theme of using their imaginations, with respect to their feelings about themselves, the children are given an opportunity today to discuss how they would dress *if they*

could wear anything they wanted to.

Discuss briefly with the children how the clothes we wear influence the way we seem to be. Stress the point that what someone wears is a *superficial* factor, but discuss how, nevertheless, we generally do notice what other people are wearing to some extent. Likewise, most people are concerned with their own personal appearance, which includes a concern for their clothing. Then ask the children:

"Use your imagination. Think of an outfit, or an assortment of clothes that you would enjoy having and wearing. You might think of school clothes, an outfit for a certain sport or activity, or even your next Halloween costume. Who would like to tell the group about the clothes you have in mind?"

As they describe the clothes they would choose, ask them:

"How do you think you would feel wearing those clothes?"

"How do you think you would look?"

Urge the children not to speak in derogatory terms about their own or anybody else's usual clothing. The purpose is just to allow the children the opportunity to use their imaginations and to tell about what they imagine.

(In the case of children who have limited wardrobes, the others may realize that these children do not necessarily dress the way they do because they want to. They too are just as likely to want nice clothing as everyone else. *Do not make a point of this in the session.* Simply allow the children to make these kinds of observations to themselves on an individual basis.)

Following a brief review, culminate by asking the children:

1. *What were some of the similarities and differences that you may have noticed in the feelings we said that we might have if we could wear anything that we wanted?*

"A Person I'd Like To Be Like"

This topic was suggested by a child and comes closer to getting at the heart of the matter of identity. By thinking about someone they admire and respect in some way, the children will focus on what the characteristics and behaviors of that person are. Thus the children are likely to increase their knowledge of what specific things go into being who they want to be.

Tell the children what the topic is, and ask them:

"Think about someone you would like to be like. It could be someone you know or someone who is famous that you would like to know, or maybe your favorite hero, or heroine from history. Tell us about the person."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How does (did) the person behave toward other people?"

If the person that they mention is someone they know personally, ask:

"How do they behave toward you?"

"How do you feel when you are with him/her?"

These questions are asked in order to bring the kinds of relationships the person has into sharp focus.

Following a review, culminate by asking the children:

1. *In what ways were the people we said we would like to be like, the same?*

2. *What were some of the feelings that we told about that we have when we are with the people who we would like to be like?*

■ Before this session, make preparations for tomorrow's activity by finding a picture to show to the children that depicts at least one thing that is going on that is fairly ambiguous. (A picture from a book or magazine that is illustrating a fantasy or a mystery story will probably do.) Bring the picture to the circle and show it to the children after today's session, just before they leave the circle. *Do not discuss the picture.* Simply ask the children to write a brief story about what they see in it. Ask them *not* to discuss the picture with each other or to show each other their stories. (Be sure to write a brief story of your own, too.)

"I 'See' Things In My Own Way"

Everyone perceives the world in their own unique way. Sometimes it is a surprise when we come face to face with this reality — that other people see things differently than we do, but it is something that is useful for us to keep in mind. If we accept this idea, our acceptance is likely to lead to increased respect for others and for ourselves.

Today's session relates to visual perception and continues from the introduction that was made yesterday. It will end with an introduction for tomorrow's session, which relates to the children's perceptions of something that you will read to them.

As the children prepare to come to the circle, ask them to bring the story they wrote, about the picture you showed them yesterday.

As soon as everyone is seated discuss briefly whether or not we all see things in exactly the same way. Then ask the children to read the stories that they wrote about the things that they saw in the picture.

After everyone has read their story, review by asking the children to tell each other what they perceived in the picture, using the words, "You saw _____," "It seemed to you as if _____," etc.

Culminate the session by asking:

1. *What were some of the main ways that we perceived what was going on in the picture that were different?*
2. *Were there any similarities?*
3. *Is it okay to be different?*

■ Before the children leave the circle, ask them to imagine that they are the writer of an advice column for the school paper. Tell them that you are going to read a letter from a student who wants some advice. Then ask them to go to their desks and write a response, without discussing the letter or their responses with each other. (Be sure to write a letter of your own, too.) Then read the following letter to the children:

Dear AAA Advice Services:

Please help me with my problem. I'm in the (sixth) grade and I'm still afraid of the dark. My friends keep inviting me to spend the night with them, but I always say no because I'm afraid that I might start screaming after they turn out the lights.

Why am I still afraid of the dark? What should I do?

Signed,

Scared E. Katt

"I 'See' Things in My Own Way (Continued)"

Today's session culminates the focus on how each person perceives, and reacts to, things in their own way.

As the children prepare for the session ask them to bring their letters to the circle which they have prepared in response to the letter requesting advice that you read to them yesterday.

Begin the session by discussing briefly how we are finding out that every person perceives in their own unique way. Then ask them to read their letters of advice that they have written to "Scared E. Katt". Expect a good deal of joviality during this phase of the session.

Review by asking the children to tell each other what they heard each other read from their letters that told what they thought caused the fear of the dark and what they thought would be a solution to the problem.

Culminate by asking the children:

1. *What were some of the main differences that we thought of that were causing Scared E. Katt to fear the dark?*
2. *What were some of the different solutions to the problem that we thought of?*

■ (Before the children leave the circle, be particularly sure to tell them that tomorrow's topic will be, "Something I Like About You". Urge them to start thinking now about something that they like about each of the other circle members.)

"Something I Like About You

(It is recommended that this topic be led by an adult, rather than a child leader.)

The purpose of today's session is to give each child the opportunity to hear at least one positive statement made to him/her by a peer and/or by you, thereby increasing their awareness, that they are a person with likeable qualities. It will also offer each child the opportunity to say something that is positive to someone else.

Begin the session by explaining briefly to the children what the format will be for the session. Then speak directly to one of the children saying his/her name and tell the child something that you like about his/her personality. (Example: *Martha, I like the way you make friends so easily. I can tell that you like other people and that's something I like a lot about you.*)

Then ask the children:

"Would someone else like to name someone and tell that person something they like about him or her?"

As the children do this, urge them to choose someone who has not been chosen yet. When every child who wants one has had a turn and some children have not had a positive statement made to them, tell the group,

"Now let's all think of something to tell (David) that we like about him."

Allow the group to freely make as many statements as they can to the child, telling him/her things that they like about him/her.

In the review, ask each child to tell the person who said something positive to them what they said. (Example: *Martha would say, "Mr. (or Mrs.) _____, you said that you like the way I make friends and the way I like other people a lot. That's something you like about me!"*)

Culminate by asking the children:

1. *How does it make you feel to hear someone tell you something that they like about you in front of a group?*
2. *How does it feel to say something to someone about what you like about them?*

Add that each of us should make it a point to remember what was said to us, and we should remind ourselves often that we have these positive qualities and are capable of these positive behaviors.

"How Do I Look"

(It is recommended that this activity be led by an adult, rather than a child leader.)

Each person is more than what their appearance tells about them, but today the children will begin to focus directly on their individual identities by discussing their unique physical characteristics in a positive context.

Bring a mirror to the session. Begin by discussing how each person is unique and beautiful in their own way, like snowflakes. Even identical twins are not really identical; they only look alike on the outside. Then tell the group what the session will consist of.

Begin by looking in the mirror and describing what you see. By way of example, (*"I have long brown hair and hazel eyes. My nose is long and I have olive skin."*) Then tell about any other physical characteristics that you might focus on at the time. (*"I am short; I am strong, etc."*) Tell your sex (*"I am a woman or a man."*) And then tell the group about one or two things that you particularly like about your physical self (*"I like my long hair and my skin."*).

Then guide the children through these steps. Make sure that everyone understands that they should tell about what they observe and like about themselves *without any negative comments*. Ask them to speak in as pleased a tone as possible. Expect the giggling and laughing that will naturally result.

Review by asking the children to tell what the physical characteristics were that each child said he liked about him/herself.

Culminate the session by asking:

1. *Why do you think that it is sometimes hard for people to say what they like about their physical characteristics in front of a group?*

"Who Am I Culturally?"

(It is recommended that this activity be led by an adult, rather than a child leader.)

Although there is general disagreement relating to how much influence culture plays, or should play, in determining our behavior, beliefs, values and attitudes, most people would probably agree that culture does play an important role. Today we will focus on cultural influences in the same positive, accepting way that we have been focusing on the children's experiences and feelings. *Each person will tell about something that they like about themselves that is a part of them as a result of their culture.*

The discussion of culture is important to all children. Those who are members of minority cultures are very aware of who they are. To experience appreciative, respectful listening as they tell about something that they like about themselves culturally will be a positive influence. Children of the majority culture often do not focus on themselves in this way. A session of this nature then, is likely to increase their awareness that they are a member of a cultural group with its own language, customs, music, beliefs, etc., and that everyone in the world is not guided by these same cultural influences.

Start the session by briefly discussing what culture is and how it influences us. Then take your turn first. Focus on the past and on the present. Tell briefly about the national backgrounds of your parents and grandparents (possibly going beyond that point) and then tell the group what country you are a citizen of. By way of example: (*"My mother's parents were born in Mexico and my father's mother was born in England and his father was born in Spain. My parents were both born in the United States and are citizens of this country. That makes me a citizen of this country,*

too.") *Then tell the group something that you like about yourself that is a part of you because of these cultural influences. (Example: "I get a special feeling when I hear Mexican music. It is so rich and beautiful, like the whole culture. I feel proud when I hear it and when I dance to it. And I'm glad that I can speak Spanish. I am glad that I am a citizen of this country too, and that I can speak English.")*

In the event that some children have difficulty isolating something in their minds that they like about themselves culturally, ask them to name something that they like about their culture. Another possibility would be to mention something that you know about them that has to do with their culture, or a positive quality that they possess that relates to their background in some way. Tell about it briefly, checking with the child to be sure that you are correct, and then tell how much you like the quality.

Review by asking the children to tell what the qualities were that each child said he/she liked in him/herself as a result of cultural influences.

Culminate by asking:

1. *Why do you think that it is a good thing for us to be proud of our cultural backgrounds and present cultures?*

"A Group I Like Belonging To"

An important part in how we identify ourselves has to do with groups to which we belong. Most people join groups that they feel comfortable being a part of and to which they feel a sense of belonging. Today the children will have an opportunity to talk about a group that they like belonging to. (Some may mention the circle session group.) Begin the session by clarifying the topic, as follows:

"Think about some group that you belong to that you like. You could tell about some kind of formal club or organization or maybe just a neighborhood group of friends."

To help the children express the feelings they have about belonging to the group that they tell about, ask:

"How did you feel at first when you joined the group?"

"How do you feel about belonging to the group now?"

Following a review, culminate by asking the children:

1. *Why do you think people join groups, clubs and organizations?*

"Something About Me That Changed From A Year Ago"

The one thing that is constant in all of our lives is that everything is always changing. One of the main things that we focus on, in general, in the circle sessions is how we have been changing and developing socially and emotionally. In this session the children will focus on these concepts in a direct manner. Begin the session by asking them:

"Think about how you have changed from a year ago in some way. Possibly you don't have a particular need anymore that you had then, or you understand something that a year ago was confusing to you. Or maybe you have overcome some kind of problem that you had. Tell us about it."

Since this is a fairly complex topic, some of the children may decide to just listen today. As the children who respond participate, ask them:

"How does it feel to know that you have changed and that you are growing all the time?"

Following a review, culminate by asking the children:

1. *What are some of the ways that we have mentioned in which we have changed in the past year?*

"How I Can Change From One Situation To Another"

All human beings are equipped with the facility to adapt and change to the demands of various situations. Today the children will discuss how they are able to do this. They will focus on how exterior circumstances, such as expectations from others, influence these changes and how they feel about these circumstances and their own behavior. (In subsequent sessions the group will discuss how at times the changes we make can be very appropriate and at other times they can lead us into certain kinds of difficulties. But today we will focus mainly on the fact that all of us do have the ability to change our behavior to the needs of various situations.)

Briefly, discuss with the children how people can change their behavior from one situation to another. To clarify the topic, ask the children:

"Have you ever been in a place doing a certain thing and then later on found yourself in another place and noticed that you were behaving in a very different way in order to meet the needs or demands of the person, or group, that you were with? Tell us about the two situations and how you behaved differently in each one."

Be very sure not to place any moral judgments on the behavior that is described or allow any of the children to do this to each other. Ask each of the children as they describe the situations they were in:

"How did you feel in each situation?"

"How did you feel about your behavior?"

Following a review, culminate by asking the children:

1. *What do you think would happen if people didn't have this ability to change their behavior from one situation to another?*
2. *What are some of the things about this ability of ours that you think are good?*
3. *Are there any disadvantages?*

"How I Changed To Please Someone (Or Some Group) But I Didn't Like That Me"

(It is recommended that this session be led by an adult, rather than a child leader.)

This topic deals with some of the complexities involved in changing from one situation to another. Today the children will focus on how they changed to please someone or some group but didn't feel "right" or natural about the way they were behaving. Sometimes when we adjust our behavior to meet the needs of some person or group it is a very appropriate thing to do, even when it feels strange, so we do it anyway. Other times it can lead to feelings of self-disrespect, depending on the situation.

This session hopes to point out to the children that it is important to be flexible and to realize that there are no hard and fast rules about exactly how they should behave in each and every life situation because each one is different and needs a conscious decision from the child with respect to his/her behavior. Discuss these ideas with the children, then ask them:

"Think of a time when you were behaving in a certain way in order to please someone, or a group, but you did not feel good about yourself as you were doing it. Tell us about it."

As the children describe these situations, ask them:

"How did you feel inside?"

"How do you feel about it now?"

Following a review, culminate by asking the children:

1. *Do you think it's a good idea to pay attention to the feelings we have about ourselves when we do certain things?*
2. *Do you think you should try to keep from doing things that give you bad feelings about yourself?*

"Something I Didn't Do Because As A (Boy Or Girl) I 'Shouldn't' Have"

(It is recommended that this session be led by an adult, rather than a child leader.)

The objectives of today's session are: (1) To give the children the opportunity to increase their awareness of how, in some ways, society generally expects and appreciates certain behaviors and attitudes in individuals because of their sex and generally does not reward certain other behaviors and attitudes in individuals, again because of their sex. (2) To help children realize that sometimes it is appropriate to comply with these kinds of expectations, but sometimes it may not be, because their personal needs and wants may not be met and opportunities might be missed.

Discuss with the children some of the specific ways that boys and girls are generally expected to behave by many people and groups, and how these behaviors are generally appreciated when they occur in a child of the sex that is expected to behave that way. (Examples: Girls should enjoy learning to cook and should get to be good at it. Boys should be interested in construction, math and science, and should never cry because that wouldn't be "manly".) Many behaviors are expected and appreciated in both boys and girls, but today the focus is on how there are certain distinct differences in the standards that are generally placed on the behaviors and attitudes of boys and on the behaviors and attitudes of girls.

Begin this session by asking the children:

"Girls, think about some of the things that girls generally aren't supposed to do, and boys, think about some of the things that boys generally aren't supposed to do. Both boys and girls, now think of something that you wanted, or needed, to do, but you didn't do, because maybe you would have 'felt funny' or you might have gotten teased or criticized. If you have thought of something like this that you didn't let yourself do, we would like to hear about it."

Discuss together how at times it is appropriate to behave as girls or boys are usually expected to, but how at other times it isn't necessary. Opportunities are lost if we don't try some of the things that we are interested in that are usually the things people of the opposite sex do.

Following a review, culminate by asking the children:

1. *Do girls always feel like behaving the way girls are generally expected to behave?*
2. *Do boys always feel like behaving the way they are expected to behave?*
3. *Why is it hard to go against these kinds of expectations?*

"A Time When I Did Something That People Of My Sex 'Shouldn't' Do"

Today's session follows closely after the preceding session entitled, *"Something I Didn't Do Because As A (Boy Or Girl) I 'Shouldn't' Have."* In the former session the children focused on the difficulty that they often experience when they want to do something that usually isn't expected of someone of their own sex — so they didn't do it. Today the children will tell about a time when they *did* do what they wanted to do, regardless of how strange it may have felt, or how much pressure was put on them not to. (Often this pressure takes the form of being teased by one's peers.) The emphasis is on how everyone is capable of going against this kind of pressure, but sometimes, it does take courage. Begin the session by clarifying the topic to the children. Then ask them:

"Have you ever gone ahead and done something that people of your sex aren't 'supposed' to do? Tell us about a time when you were able to do this despite 'funny feelings' inside yourself or being afraid of being teased or criticized."

As the children participate, remind them that we don't need to know who the person may have been who teased or criticized them. Ask each child:

"How did you feel at first, and later on, and now, about doing it?"

"How did other people react?"

Following a review, culminate by asking the children:

1. *If you are a boy, do you always have to behave the way boys are generally expected to behave?*
2. *If you are a girl, do you always have to behave the way girls are generally expected to behave?*
3. *Are there times when it might be best to behave the way people expect you to behave because of being a boy or because of being a girl?*

"How I Would Like To Be Known By Others"

Everyone has some ideas about how they would like others to see them, or how they would like other people to feel about them. Today the children will talk about the kinds of qualities and characteristics they would like to be known to have.

Begin the session by telling the children what the topic is and possibly taking your turn first, if necessary. Tell the group one or two qualities that you think are valuable that you would like people to think are qualities of yours. Then ask the children:

"Have you ever thought about how you would like to be known by others? Tell us about the kinds of things you would like for other people to know about you."

As the children take their turns, ask them:

"How do you think it would make you feel if you knew that people saw you as (an honest) person?"

"How do you feel toward people who have these qualities?"

Following a review, culminate by asking the children:

1. *What were the characteristics and qualities that seemed to be mentioned the most in this session that we found to be valuable?*

"Something I Think I'll Like About Being A Teenager"

Today the children will begin to focus on their identities in the future and what life will be like then. This is the first of a series of topics which deal with their attitudes about their approaching teen years. It is our purpose in these sessions to introduce this general area of discussion and the specific notion that as they grow and develop, gaining more skills and privileges, the children's responsibilities will correspondingly increase. Briefly discuss these ideas with the children and then ask them:

"What do you think you will like about being a teenager? It might be something that you are sure that you will be able to do then, that you can't do now, or maybe you'll just like being older than you are now. Whatever the reason, we would like to hear about it."

As the children begin to respond, ask them:

"How do you think it will make you feel when you are able to (stay up till after 10:00?)"

Following a review, culminate by asking the children:

1. *When you get to be a teenager, you'll probably be able to do some things you're not able to do now. What do you think some of the responsibilities that go along with these privileges are going to be?*

"When I'm A Teenager, I Hope . . ."

Today the children will be given the opportunity to fantasize about the kinds of things they hope will happen when they are teenagers.

Briefly discuss at the beginning of the session how all of them are going to become teenagers and what they think it's going to be like. Then ask them:

"Think of at least one thing that you hope for very much that you will be able to do, or some condition that will be present in your life, when you are a teenager. Tell us about it."

As the children tell what the things are they they hope for, ask them:

"How do you think it will feel (to drive a car)?"

Following a review, culminate by asking the children:

1. *What are some of the things that you see happening in the lives of teenagers now that you hope won't be happening to you when you are a teenager?*

"A Problem I Might Have When I'm A Teenager"

(This topic is particularly suitable for dyads.)

In this session the children will focus on the reality that with every age come accompanying problems. This may be the first time that they have thought about the fact that becoming a teenager is not only going to have rewards, but also certain responsibilities and various kinds of

difficulties. Briefly discuss these ideas with the children and then ask them:

"What do you think might be some of the problems that you might have to deal with when you are a teenager? Tell us about one problem that you have thought of."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How do you think you would feel if you had that problem?"

"What is a possible way that you can think of now for avoiding, or maybe even solving, that problem?"

Following a review, culminate by asking the children:

1. *Is there any age that people can get to where there aren't any problems anymore?*

"The Kind Of Person I Want To Be When I'm A Teenager"

(This topic is particularly suitable for dyads.)

In this last session on identity the children will have an opportunity to focus on the kinds of persons they want to be when they are teenagers, thereby isolating certain characteristics and qualities that they value and would like to incorporate into their personalities.

Begin the session by asking the children:

"Do you know anyone who is a teenager that you admire very much — someone who has certain qualities that you would like to have when you are a teenager? Tell us about him or her."

Some of the children may know some teenagers who have the kinds of qualities that they would *not* like to have when they are that age. Contributions along these lines will be informative and of value too, as long as personalities do not become the focus. As the children participate, ask them:

"How do you think it will feel when you are a teenager and you are (a good athlete) and (are friendly with other people)?"

Following a review, culminate by asking the children:

1. *Do you think it helps us to become the kind of people we want to become if we talk about it first?*
2. *What are some of the things that you have learned about each other in this session and the other sessions that we have had about identity?*
3. *What are some of the things that you have learned about yourself that you may not have realized before?*

SUPPLEMENTARY ACTIVITIES RELATED TO IDENTITY/PRESENT AND FUTURE

Art: A Collage That Reflects My Ideas About Me

In order to prepare for this activity, ask the children to bring old magazines that are full of colorful words and pictures to school. When enough have accumulated (at least one per child)

spread them out among the children and ask them to cut out words and pictures that remind them of themselves or refer to themselves in some positive way. Give each child a fairly large sheet of paper, make paste or glue available to them, and ask them to share the magazines with each other. Tell them that they may stick the words and pictures from the magazines on the piece of paper in any order or by any design that pleases them. Encourage them to be as imaginative and creative as possible. The result will be collages, each of which will reflect each child's sense of design and choice of personally meaningful words and pictures. When all of the collages are completed the children who wish to may meet in small groups of 4 to 5 to show each other their collages and to discuss them.

"All About Me"

Reproduce a copy of the following exercise for each child in the class, or give each of the children a piece of paper. If you choose to pass out paper, ask the children to write "All About Me" at the top. Then ask them to write completions for the following sentences on their papers. (You may either write these sentences on the board or dictate them to the children. They need only write their completions on their papers.)

If I were a bird, (examples: hawk, canary, ostrich, etc.) I would be a (1) _____, because (2) _____.

If I were a natural resource, (examples: mountain, river, forest, etc.) I would be a (3) _____, because (4) _____.

If I were an aircraft, (examples: 747 jet, helicopter, Piper Cub, etc.) I would be a (5) _____, because (6) _____.

If I were a plant, (examples: daisy, cactus, redwood tree, etc.) I would be a (7) _____, because (8) _____.

If I were a man-made structure, (examples: bridge, cottage, dam, etc.) I would be a (9) _____, because (10) _____.

If I were something in outer space, (examples: the sun, the milky way, pluto, etc.) I would be (11) _____, because (12) _____.

Ten things that I like about myself are: _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____.

Read what the children have written and comment positively to each one confidentially in writing. Because this is an awareness activity and not a written language lesson, do not "correct" these papers with respect to punctuation, grammar, or spelling, etc. The children may share what they have written with each other during some free period if they wish to.

Written Report: Appreciation Of My Cultural Identity

Ask the children to select one (or more) of the countries their forefathers were born in, or the country of their own citizenship, and to prepare a report about the culture of that country using available reference materials in the classroom and/or school library and most importantly, information they receive from their parents and relatives through interviews. Ask them to write something in their report about how these cultural influences might be present in some form in their lives today.

Music Appreciation: Culture Represented in Melodies And Lyrics

Obtain recordings of music from as many countries and cultures that the children base their

reports on as possible (see above activity) and play them for the class. Appreciatively discuss the beautiful aspects of each type of music. Discuss other features, such as the language, dances, costumes and literature of the children's present cultures and cultural backgrounds in a positive vein.

Music, Singing, Creative Dramatics: Songs And Stories About Identity

Play the album, "Free to Be . . . You and Me"¹ for the class and discuss the meaning of each song and story as a class, or in small group discussions (not necessarily circle sessions). Various songs and stories on the album relate closely to Identity. Others relate to the units on Relationships and Exploring Feelings in this guide.

Since the record was primarily made for younger children, allow the class to make a presentation to a kindergarten or first grade class, in which they sing some of the songs along with the record. Dramatic renditions may also be presented in the form of record pantomimes.

Creative Writing About Becoming A Teenager

Ask the children to write a story entitled, "When I'm A Teenager." Urge them to tell about the enjoyable things that they are looking forward to, what their hopes are, what some of their problems might be (and some ways to possibly avoid these problems or find solutions for them) and the kind of people they would like to be when they are teenagers.

¹"Free to Be . . . You and Me" was recorded by Mario Thomas and Friends, Bell Records, 1972.

UNIT VI

MASTERY: ENDEAVORS

Expending effort is increasingly becoming a significant part of the sixth grader's life. The children with whom we work will continue to do their academic work at school and will more readily take on other responsibilities and jobs at home and elsewhere.

Working brings about many feelings in people. On the negative side, we sometimes feel bored, overwhelmed, or that the job is drudgery. Positive feelings include zestful involvement, pride, and feelings of effectiveness. Other matters of concern to us all that relate to work, are the relationship between the "boss" and the workers, and the use of earnings. This unit provides the children with a chance to talk about these issues with each other.

By discussing the various topics relating to endeavors, the children will focus on jobs that they do at present, ones that they like and ones that they don't like. They will talk about the kind of work they think might be rewarding to them as adults, that might in some way relate to jobs that they like to do now. Through positive modes of interaction, the children will have a number of opportunities to be validated by one another and to validate themselves, with respect to their effectiveness. Thus the critical area of self-worth will be addressed with respect to the children's ability to accomplish their endeavors. They will also be given a chance to develop increased awareness of their interests, preferences, and capabilities, and will deal with issues relating to responsible competence. All of these matters are basic to intelligent career planning and are emphasized by educators who believe that there is more to career education than simply testing young people in high schools and informing them as to the career choices that exist for adults.

Topics On Endeavors

"A Job I Like"

"A Job I Don't Like"

"Something I Worked Hard At"

"I Liked a Job Because I Could Do It"

"I Did It Because It Needed to Be Done"

"Something That You Do Well"

"Something I Do Well That I Like to Do"

"I Did It All By Myself"

"I Accomplished Something at School"

"A Time When I Was the Boss"

"A Time When Somebody Else Was Boss"

"Something I Did (or Made) That I'm Proud Of"

"A Time When I Worked Too Much (or Too Hard)"

"A Way I Earned Something and What I Did with It"

"A Time When I Traded with Somebody"

"Something Worth Saving Money For"

"Something That I Want to Do (or Make) Someday, That I Haven't Done Yet"

"Something That I Like to Do Now That Could Relate to My Job When I'm an Adult"

"A Job I Like"

Today the children will have an opportunity to talk about some of the kinds of jobs that they do that they enjoy. Through this discussion, they are given the opportunity to find out that everyone does not enjoy doing the same job. Begin the session by asking the children:

"Think of a job, some kind of work, that you have done that you enjoyed and tell us about it. We would like to hear."

As the children begin to participate, be sure to ask them:

"How does it feel when you (deliver newspapers)?"

"How does it feel when you get the job done?"

Following a review, culminate by asking the children:

1. *Does everyone enjoy doing the very same job?*
2. *What are some of the similarities and differences in the preferences of the people in our group with respect to jobs that we like?*

"A Job I Don't Like"

Today the children will focus their attention on jobs they have done that they did not enjoy. Although there may be some consensus about general kinds of work, they will learn that everyone does not dislike the very same job. Begin the discussion by asking the children:

"Have you ever done a job that you didn't like? Tell us about it."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How do you feel when you (rake leaves)?"

"How do you feel when the job is done?"

Following a review, culminate by asking the children:

1. *Do all of us dislike the very same kind of work?*
2. *What are some of the similarities and differences that you noticed between us, with respect to jobs that we do not like?*

"Something I Worked Hard At"

Today the children will continue their discussions of jobs and how they feel about doing work. The objective for this session is to give them a chance to describe something *that they put a lot of effort into*, and to discuss the various feelings that resulted. Begin the participation phase by asking the children:

"Think about a time when you worked at some kind of job or project very hard. Tell us what it was and how you did it."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How did you feel when you were (planting all the seeds in your garden)?"

"How do you feel about it now?"

Following a review, culminate the session by asking:

1. *What were the things that caused us to have good feelings that we told about?*
2. *What caused the negative feelings?*
3. *How do most of us feel now about looking back on something that we worked hard at?*

"I Liked A Job Because I Could Do It"

Today the children will discuss how jobs are often enjoyable for people when they aren't too difficult. Begin the discussion by asking the children:

"Think of a time when you recently were doing a job and it was something that you could do rather well, so you enjoyed it. Tell the group about what it was."

In the participation phase, ask the children:

"How did you feel when you were (washing the windows)?"

"How did you feel when you got the job done?"

Following a review, culminate by asking the children:

1. *If you are asking a person who is younger than you are, to do a job, what might be a good thing to keep in mind?*
2. *Can you think of any jobs that aren't enjoyable for you because they aren't challenging enough?*

"I Did It Because It Needed To Be Done"

Very often people do jobs simply because they need to be done. If the job that needs to be done is enjoyable so much the better, but sometimes this isn't possible. Today the children will discuss this reality. Begin the session by asking the children:

"Did you ever find yourself doing a job, not because you really liked doing it, or maybe not because anybody asked you, but just because it needed to be done. Tell us about what the job was and how you did it."

As each child participates, ask:

"How did you feel as you (shoveled the snow)?"

"As you look back on what you did, how do you feel about it right now?"

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *Who are some people that you can think of, who do a lot of jobs simply because they need to be done?*

■ (Be sure to announce tomorrow's topic, "Something That You Do Well," and ask the children to start thinking about some of the things that the other group members do well.)

"Something That You Do Well"

(It is recommended that this topic be led by an adult, rather than a child leader.)

Today the children will have an opportunity to give and receive feedback to one another about jobs that they have noticed that they do well. Begin the session by asking them:

"Think of something that you have noticed that someone in the group does well."

Then ask them to look at the person and say:

"(Child's name), I have noticed something you do well. It is . . ."

To get the ball rolling, it would probably be a good idea for you to take your turn first, naming a child and telling him/her about something that you have seen the child do well.

As each child is told by another, about something that he/she does well, ask the child:

"How does it make you feel (to know that Diana thinks you are good at being a team captain)?"

Discuss how, at first, it may make us feel somewhat embarrassed to receive this kind of validation in front of everybody, but most people seem to appreciate hearing it just the same.

As the children participate, encourage them to make their positive statements to someone who has not as yet been chosen. When every child who wishes to speak has had a turn, check around the circle and find out who has not as yet been chosen. For these children, ask the group:

"Who will tell (Tom) something that he does well?"

Call on a number of children to freely mention things that come to mind. Make a statement of your own to each of these children too. Continue to do this until every child has heard at least one validating statement from another group member about something that he/she does well.

Conduct a review, in which each child looks at the group member who validated him/her and tells the group member, *"You said that I (am a good team captain)."*

Culminate this session by asking the children:

1. *If someone tells you about something that you do well, how does it make you feel at first and then after a little while?*
2. *How is it probably going to make them feel if you tell them things that you have noticed that they do well?*

"Something I Do Well That I Like To Do"

Yesterday the children validated each other. Today they will validate themselves by verbally "owning" something that they do well. They will also be given the opportunity, via the content of the session, to gain increased awareness of their personal competencies, interests, and preferences. Begin the session by asking the children:

"When we think carefully to ourselves, every one of us knows about something that we do well. Today we will encourage each other to speak very positively about ourselves in this session. Tell us about something that you know that you can do well."

As each child participates, ask:

"What kind of feeling do you get from knowing that you are able to (take care of animals) well?"

"How do you feel telling us about it in this circle?"

Following a review, culminate by asking the children:

1. *Is it generally easy for us to say positive things about ourselves in a group?*
2. *Why or why not?*
3. *Are you glad that we did it?*

"I Did It All By Myself"

This is an important topic for just about everybody. As they grow and develop, self-sufficiency and independence become important issues in the lives of children. Today they will continue to validate themselves, as they did yesterday, by telling the group about some kind of job or accomplishment that they did without assistance from anyone else. Begin the session by asking them:

"Think of a job that you have done recently that you did all by yourself. Tell us what the job was and how you felt when you started doing it."

During the participation phase, ask the children:

"How did you feel when you got the job done?"

"How do you feel, knowing that you can do things all by yourself?"

Discuss how good people feel when they are proud of themselves. Following a review, culminate by asking the children:

1. *Did most of us seem to have similar feelings as a result of getting a job done all by ourselves?*
2. *What similarities and differences did you notice?*

"I Accomplished Something At School"

Since school is such an important arena in the lives of children, this topic will be important to them. Today they will have the opportunity to talk about "jobs" (projects, tasks, assignments, etc.), that they have done at school that were successful. Begin the session by asking the children:

"Think about a job that you have done recently at school that you did well. It could have been a project, a task, or an assignment that you worked on, or possibly some kind of job that you did, such as cleaning an area of the classroom, or helping the secretary in the school office. Tell us about how you did it."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How did it feel to accomplish (the arrangement of an interest center)?"

Focus the discussion on how important it is to all of us to be aware of our successes and capabilities, even if we "feel" like we're bragging when we tell about them.

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *What are some interesting things about this session that you noticed that you would like to mention?*

"A Time When I Was The Boss"

Children, like everyone else, are keenly aware of who is in charge of each and every situation. Sometimes they have opportunities to be the leader, or "boss", (such as leading circle sessions), and these experiences are very important ones for them. Today they will have the opportunity to discuss the positive aspects of being "the one in charge" and also the reality that very often challenging responsibilities accompany the role. Begin the session by asking the children:

"Think of a time when there was some kind of situation where several people were together, trying to do something and you were the "boss" — you were the one who had the responsibility of 'being in charge.' Tell us what it was like for you."

During the participation phase, ask the children:

"How did it feel to be the one who was 'in charge'?"

"What was easy and what was difficult about it?"

Following the review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *Do you think that children should be "the boss" more often?*
2. *Is being the one who's "in charge" always easy?*
3. *What is a good leader like?*

"A Time When Somebody Else Was Boss"

Today the children will discuss the situation that is more prominent in their lives. They will be focusing on how it feels when they are working with someone else who is the boss. Begin the session by asking them:

"Think of a recent time when you were working with other people, but you were not the boss and somebody else was. Tell us about the situation."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How did it feel for somebody else to be the boss?"

"If you could have, would you have changed places with him/her? Why or why not?"

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *When do you feel okay about not being the one who is in charge?*
2. *When do you feel okay about being the boss?*
3. *Is there anything you can do to affect these conditions?*

"Something I Did (Or Made) That I'm Proud Of"

Today the children will have another opportunity to increase their awareness of their own capabilities and accomplishments. This topic is similar to "I Did It All By Myself," but the focus is not necessarily on an independent accomplishment. However, if the child did do the task all by him/herself, so much the better. Begin the session by asking the children:

"Think about something that you did (or made) that you are proud of. We would like to hear about what it was."

As the children participate, ask them:

"What was your feeling when you (fixed your bike)?"

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *Are all of us the same in that we all like to feel proud of ourselves for getting a job done well?*

"A Time When I Worked Too Much (Or Too Hard)"

Practically everything can be done to excess and this includes work. By offering the children the opportunity to discuss this topic we are exposing them to a notion that balances the picture. Work can be satisfying and very good for us and for others, but it is possible to overdo it. Many adults are very overworked and in some way the antecedent attitudes that cause them to push themselves unreasonably to accomplish too many tasks for the time available, may very likely have begun in childhood. Briefly discuss these ideas with the children and then begin the session by asking them:

"Think of a time when you worked too much(or too hard). Tell us about it."

Many of the children will tell about a situation in which someone else (remind them not to mention names) kept after them to do the work. In these cases, do not get involved with the issue of whether or not the person was justified, or whether or not the child's attitude is appropriate. Rather, keep it simple by asking each child:

"How did you feel at the time?"

"If there were any other people involved, how did they seem to be feeling?"

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *What are some of the things that you noticed about this session that you would like to mention?*

"A Way I Earned Something And What I Did With It"

This is a matter of concern for most children. By this time in their lives, many of them will have earned some money, (or some other type of compensation) for work that they have performed. As they grow older, their opportunities to earn will increase. Besides giving each child a chance to tell about his/her own effectiveness, this session will offer all of the children a number of suggestions for paying jobs that they could do. In addition, each child will receive input with respect to the use of earnings. Begin the session by asking them:

"Think about a time when you did some kind of work and you earned something for your work. (It doesn't have to have been money.) Tell us about the job and how you did it. If you would like to tell us about what you did with what you earned, we would like to hear about that too."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How did you feel about doing the job?"

"How did you feel about earning (the money)?"

"How do you feel now about the way you used (the money)?"

Following a review, ask the children:

1. *Did you get any new ideas about ways to earn money (or something else) from this session? What were they?*

"A Time When I Traded With Somebody"

Acquiring new objects and bartering does not always involve money. Sometimes we simply trade things with one another to acquire what we want. Since this is a very real possibility and a utilitarian function for recycling goods, this topic will have suggestive value for all of the children in the circle. Begin the session by asking them:

"Think about a time when you wanted something but you didn't have any money, so instead of buying it you worked out a trade arrangement with somebody. Tell us how you arranged it."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How do you feel about the trade now?"

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *What are some things that you noticed about this session that you would like to mention?*

"Something Worth Saving Money For"

Today the children will discuss some of the things that they believe are valuable enough to save their money for and how they feel about waiting and saving for something. Begin the session by asking them:

"If you had some money and you were going to save it, what do you think is valuable enough to save for? Or, maybe you are saving your money for something now. In either case, tell us about the thing you think is worth saving for."

Do not allow the discussion to center on how much money each child has, rather help them focus on things that they consider to be worth saving for, regardless of how much they've got to save.

As the children participate, ask them:

"How do you feel about waiting for something as you save for it?"

"How do you think it would feel when you have accumulated enough for (a paint set)?"

Discuss how all people have the right to use their money the way they wish and how saving money can sometimes be difficult. Yet it is worthwhile for many people, who do manage to acquire valuable things (material and otherwise), because they waited and saved.

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *Do you think that you should always save every bit of money that you have?*
2. *Should you spend it all?*
3. *Why or why not?*

"Something That I Want To Do (Or Make) Someday That I Haven't Done Yet"

Today's session is of a very open-ended nature. It offers the children the opportunity to look into the future and to think about something that they presently wish for, or plan to do, that may actually happen some day. They may go as far into the future in responding as they wish. Begin by asking them:

"Is there some kind of job or project that you would like to do someday, or something that you would like to make, that you haven't done yet? It could be what you would like to do when you are an adult, or any kind of job that you would like to have while you are a teenager, or possibly even some kind of task that you are looking forward to doing in the next few days. Tell us about it."

As the children participate, ask:

"How do you think it will feel when you are (making bread)?"

"Are there any other feelings about it that you have right now that you would like to share?"

Following a review, culminate by asking the children:

1. *How far into the future did we go when we thought about what we wanted to do (or make) someday that we haven't done yet?*
2. *Is it easier to think about something that you want to do (or make) in the next few days, than it is to think of something you want to do (or make) as a teenager, or as an adult?*

"Something That I Like To Do Now That Could Relate To My Job When I'm An Adult"

(This session should be led by an adult, rather than a child leader.)

Today the children will have the opportunity to see how some of the things that they enjoy doing now might possibly relate to their career choice. This is an important notion. The more a child becomes aware of the kinds of things that he/she enjoys doing, the more likely the child is to find a job in the future that coincides with his/her preferences. Begin the session by asking them:

"Think about some kind of job that you like to do now that could in some way relate to the kind of job you could have when you are an adult. Tell us about it."

For children who cannot think of anything that they like to do now that could relate to their career choice, ask:

"What kind of job would you like to have as an adult?"

As the children participate, ask them:

"How do you think it would feel to be (an architect)?"

Be very sure to remain perfectly accepting in this session. If a child names some kind of occupation that you feel is unlikely for that child, be very careful that you in no way reflect this to him/her. People who now hold responsible and rewarding jobs first imagined themselves doing so at some earlier time in their lives. For this reason, this session is likely to be an important one for many of the children.

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

- 1. Is it too early to start thinking about the kinds of jobs we like?*
- 2. Should we make up our minds now about what jobs we will have as adults?*

SUPPLEMENTARY ACTIVITIES RELATED TO ENDEAVORS:

Jobs For Children Within The School Setting

If such arrangements have not been made within the school's organizational structure, check with the principal and other teachers about possible jobs the children in your class could volunteer for. These might include: leading games and other group activities with small groups of children in the primary grades, or office and custodial responsibilities. These may be organized on a one-time-only, or a systematic basis. Offer some kind of credit to the children who take on these responsibilities.

Giving Children Leadership Responsibilities

Find as many ways as possible to allow the children to take on leadership responsibilities. They may be chairmen of committees, captains of teams, "consultants", etc. When you notice that a child is doing a good job of being a leader, be sure to reinforce the behavior by making positive comments of a specific nature to all of the children about the ways that the child is being effective as the "person in charge."

Interviewing And Reporting

Ask the children to conduct two interviews, one with a teenager, and one with an adult, who have jobs that seem interesting to them. Ask them to think of at least three questions to ask each of the interviewees about their jobs. The questions may relate to the kinds of feelings that they have about doing their jobs, about the salaries they earn, and the qualifications they needed to get the job. The information gained may be reported in written form along with the child's reaction to the interview process. The reports may be compiled in a class notebook for the children to read and share with each other. Oral reports may also be made to the class regarding the career information that was acquired.

Guest Speakers — Group Interviews

Invite several individuals who have various kinds of jobs to come to the class to speak to the children about their jobs. Attempt to achieve a wide variety in the kinds of careers to be

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represented (labor, professional, service, "boss", employee, etc.) and if possible, have people come who *do not* generally fit the stereotype (racial, ethnic, sexual, or other) of the person who generally has that particular type of job. (For example, ask a woman doctor to come to speak to the class.) After each speaker has addressed the class for a period of time about his/her job, encourage the class to ask questions.

Reports Based On Use Of The Want Ads

Bring several newspapers into the class and spread the want ad sections around so that the children may have an opportunity to look them over extensively. Ask them to pick out several jobs, (at least three) that look interesting to them, and to copy down what the ads say, each on a separate piece of paper. Under the ad, ask the children to write a paragraph about how they think they would feel about doing a job of that nature. These reports may then be accumulated for a class notebook that provides information about various types of jobs that have been researched by the members of the class. Before the book is completed, a committee may take all of the reports and classify them into a number of job categories, providing a table of contents or an index.

UNIT VII

SOCIAL INTERACTION: RELATIONSHIPS

As children grow and develop, their relationships with others become increasingly more important to them. Their interactions with classmates, other peers, family members and significant adults in their lives are critical components that participate with other factors in shaping their personalities. Because these social experiences are so important, it follows that the children need to realistically understand how relationships operate and how they can behave constructively to make their interactions with others positive and rewarding.

Some of the major objectives of this unit are to help the children understand that: (1) everyone needs attention and appreciation from others, (2) relationships are affected by the feelings that the people in the relationships cause in one another, leading to behaviors which, in turn, lead to other feelings and other behaviors, (3) each person can *act* (not just *react*) in certain ways to initiate and enrich relationships and even change poor ones into healthy ones, and (4) warm, friendly relationships are possible with anyone, not just one's peers.

The unit begins with very positive, elementary topics that generally relate to friendship. Gradually the focus is shifted to some of the complexities that occur in relationships. While some activities in the latter part of the unit deal with negative behavior and will require serious thought on the part of the children, the matter of conflict between individuals will not be discussed at this time. The critical issue of conflict resolution is presented as the final unit in this guide.

After the children discuss the initial topics that relate to friendship, they will begin to address such matters as behaviors that they consciously avoid when they want someone to be their friend, qualities and behaviors they value in friends of the opposite sex, how they were involved in helping others and being helped and how sometimes help is not welcome. The children will discuss how they reached out to someone when they knew that he/she needed a friend, how they felt when they were the one who needed a friend and when their friend moved away. The children will also discuss how they can sometimes predict each other's behavior, but very often they can't, and how people sometimes tease and put pressure on one another. In these sessions the focus is on what the children themselves can do to avoid these problems in the first place and how they can deal with them effectively when they do occur. The unit ends on a positive note with topics that relate to how poor relationships can be changed into rewarding ones and how the children may have used some of the social skills and information that they have been learning in the circle in other life situations.

TOPICS ON RELATIONSHIPS

"What I Value In A Friend"

"One Of The Best Times I Ever Had With A Friend"

"One Of The Nicest Things A Friend Ever Did For Me"

"Something Nice That I Did For A Friend"

"How I Made Friends And It Turned Out Good"

"Things That I Enjoy Doing With Other Students At School"

"Things That I Enjoy Doing With My Friends Away From School"

"Something That I Never Do When I Want To Make Friends With Someone"

"What I Value In Friends Of The Opposite Sex"

"How I Helped Someone Who Needed And Wanted My Help"

"Someone Helped Me When I Needed And Wanted His/Her Help"
 "I Got Some Help I Didn't Want"
 "I Reached Out To Someone When I Knew He/She Needed A Friend"
 "When I Was The One Who Needed A Friend"
 "When My Friend Moved Away"
 "I Predicted Someone's Behavior Correctly"
 "I Didn't Know He/She Would React That Way"
 "A Time When I Got Teased"
 "My Friends Tried To Make Me Do Something That I Didn't Want To Do"
 "How I Got My Friend To Change"
 "A Friend (Or Friends) And I Got Into Trouble"
 "How I Changed A Poor Relationship That I Had With Someone Into A Good One"
 "How I Use The Skills And Information I Am Learning In The Circle In Other Situations"

"What I Value In A Friend"

By discussing the things that they value in people who they call their friends, the children will begin this unit by focusing directly on various positive qualities and behaviors. By so doing, they will gain information which may increase their awareness of what kinds of qualities and behaviors are generally seen as being desirable in a friend. Thus this initial session provides strong suggestive value. Begin the session by asking them:

"Think about the things that you think are important for friends to do for each other and the kinds of qualities that you think a good friend should have. Tell us about some of the things that you have thought of."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How do you feel about your friend when (he/she sticks by you when other people are mad at you)?"

Following a review in which the children's feelings are focused upon, culminate the session by asking them:

1. *What were some of the main things that were mentioned in this session about the qualities and behaviors that we value in friends?*
2. *If you want your friend to behave in these ways, does this mean that it would be good for you to do these things too?*

"One Of The Best Times I Ever Had With A Friend"

This topic was suggested by a child. Today the children will have an opportunity to share delightful experiences that they had with their friends, which in itself is a positive experience. They will also learn what kinds of things other children enjoy doing. Begin the session by asking them:

"Think about a time when you were with a friend and you were having a wonderful time together. Tell us about it."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How did you feel when you (went ice skating with your friend)?"

How did your friend seem to feel?"

Following a review focusing on the feelings the children and their friends experienced, culminate the session by asking the them:

1. *Did all of us get exactly the same feelings in exactly the same ways when we had good times with our friends?*
2. *What differences in feelings, and experiences, did you notice?*

"One Of The Nicest Things A Friend Ever Did For Me"

It is a genuinely heartwarming experience for people to be able to tell others about something nice that someone did for them. Today the children will have an opportunity to do this. Through this kind of discussion they will have a chance to increase their repertoire of positive behaviors. Begin the session by asking them:

"Think about something that was very nice that a friend did for you. They may have given you something, or they may have asked you to a party, or maybe they said something to you that made you feel very good. Whatever it was, we would like to hear about it."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How did it feel (when your friend arranged for you to go with his/her family on a camping trip)?"

Following a review focusing on the positive behaviors that were told about, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *Why do you think our friends do nice things for us?*
2. *What similarities did you notice in our feelings when our friends did nice things for us?*

"Something Nice That I Did For A Friend"

Today the children will take deserved credit for their positive behavior, by telling about something nice that they did for a friend. Begin the session by asking them:

"Think about something nice that you did for a friend, and tell us what it was."

As the children begin to respond, ask them:

"How did you feel when you (told your friend that you liked being with him/her)?"

"How did your friend seem to feel about it?"

Following a review in which the children reflect to each other what their positive behaviors were, culminate the session by asking them:

1. *Why do you think we do nice things for our friends?*
2. *What similarities did you notice in the feelings we got when we do nice things for our friends?*

"How I Made Friends And It Turned Out Good"

This is another topic that was suggested by a child. By discussing it, the children are given an opportunity to tell how they have been socially successful. They will also benefit from hearing about a number of other methods that their peers used that proved to be successful for making friends. Begin the session by asking them:

"Think about a time when you wanted to make friends with someone and so you did something to make friends and it turned out good. Tell us about how you did it."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How did you feel inside, just before you approached him/her?"

"How did you feel inside, after you became friends?"

Following a review, culminate the session by asking:

1. *Did we all make friends in the same way?*
2. *What were some of the similarities in the ways we made friends?*
3. *What were some of the differences?*

"Things That I Enjoy Doing With Other Students At School"

Today the children will discuss their relationships with other children at school, a very important influence in their lives. They will approach this focal area by telling about things that they enjoy doing with their fellow students while they are at school. Begin the session by asking them:

"Think about something that you like to do when you are at school with some of your friends here. Maybe it is something that you particularly enjoy doing in the classroom that you do with other students or when you are together at lunch or on the playground. Tell us about what you have thought of."

As the children respond, ask them:

"What is it about your friends at school that you enjoy when you are with them?"

"How do you feel when you are (talking together at lunch time)?"

"How do they seem to be feeling?"

Following a review which focuses on the feelings that were expressed, culminate the activity by asking the children:

1. *Do you think relationships with other students are an important part of what goes on at school for each student?*
2. *What about relationships with teachers and other adults at school?*

"Things That I Enjoy Doing With My Friends Away From School"

Today the children will be given an opportunity to tell you and their fellow students in the circle session group about some of their relationships with other people in their lives away from school. This is an important session for them because children generally appreciate an opportunity to tell their peers at school that they have meaningful experiences in other situations too. As a result of the interaction in this session the children will culminate by dealing with the issue of who can be friends with whom. Begin the session by asking them:

"Think of some of the things that you enjoy doing away from school with other friends that you have. Maybe these other friends live in your neighborhood, or are relatives, or some other friends that you know, like friends at church. Tell us about your relationship with them and what you enjoy doing when you are together."

As the children respond, ask them:

"What is it about these friends that you enjoy when you are with them?"

"How do you feel when you are (together for a family picnic)?"

"How do they seem to be feeling?"

Following a review which focuses on the feelings that were expressed, culminate the activity by asking the children:

1. *Are all of our important friendships with our fellow students at school?*
2. *Can people who are different ages or who are related to each other in some way be friends (like brothers and sisters, cousins, neices and nephews and aunts and uncles, parents and children, teachers and students, and husbands and wives)?*
3. *Why or why not?*

"Something I Never Do When I Want To Make Friends With Someone"

In today's session the children will focus their attention on the kinds of behaviors that they deliberately avoid when they want someone to like them. By sharing in this way, each child will have an opportunity to gain increased awareness of ineffective modes of social interaction. They will also be exposed to individual differences in people. Begin the session by asking them:

"If you want to make friends with someone, what is something that you never do? Tell us about what it is."

As the children participate, ask them:

"What do you think would happen if you did (make fun of the person)?"

"How do you feel when someone (makes fun of you)?"

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *What were some of the main things that you noticed about this session?*

"What I Value In Friends Of The Opposite Sex"

Today the children will be given an opportunity to talk about behaviors and qualities that they appreciate in members of the opposite sex. By so doing they will have a chance to conclude for themselves that certain behaviors and qualities are appreciated in other people, in general. If a friend, regardless of his or her sex, is considerate, warm, and full of enthusiasm for life (among other attributes) these are basically the things that matter. Begin the session by telling the children what the topic is and by asking them:

"Think about what the qualities and ways of doing things are that you value and appreciate in your friends who are of the opposite sex. Tell us what these qualities and behaviors are for you."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How do you feel when you are with (a boy who has a good sense of humor)?"

Expect the laughing and giggling that will naturally occur as the children discuss this topic. Following a review in which the feelings that the children expressed are reflected upon, culminate the session by asking them:

1. *Do we generally seem to value different things in friends of the opposite sex than for friends of the same sex?*
2. *What conclusions have you come to as a result of this session?*

"How I Helped Someone Who Needed And Wanted My Help"

In today's and tomorrow's sessions, we will focus on the good feelings which can result when people lend each other assistance that is both needed and desired. Appropriate helping behaviors are an important part of every healthy relationship. Briefly discuss the fact with the children that people often have to be helped by each other many times and in many ways each day. Then ask them:

"Think about a time when you helped someone who needed and wanted your help. Tell us about how you did it."

As the children respond, ask them:

"How did it make you feel to be helpful?"

"How do you think the other person felt?"

Following a review focusing on both the manner in which the children were helpful and how they felt, culminate the session by asking them:

1. *Who usually feels good when one person helps another?*

"Someone Helped Me When I Needed And Wanted His/Her Help"

This session explores the opposite side of the coin from yesterday's session. Now the children will think about how it feels to be the person who was helped when they needed and wanted it, by remembering a time when this happened to them.

Briefly discuss yesterday's session and then ask the children:

"Think about a time when you were the person who needed and wanted some help and received it from someone else. Tell us about what happened."

As the children tell about an event of this nature, ask them:

"How did you feel as the person on the receiving end of the help?"

"How do you think it made the person who helped you feel?"

Following a brief review focusing on both the positive helping behaviors and how the children felt, culminate by asking them:

1. *How did the people who helped us seem to feel about getting a chance to be helpful?*
2. *In what way did we do something nice for them?*
3. *When should people not help each other?*

"I Got Some Help I Didn't Want"

Today the children will talk about when it is appropriate *not* to help, by relating an incident in which they received some undesired assistance. This seems to happen to everyone to some degree, but children are especially sensitive to what they can and cannot do and often resent attempts on the part of someone else to do something for them that they are learning to do for themselves. In many cases when children are struggling with a task, they are going through important, self-stimulated learning experiences, and *need* to be involved in the struggle. There is a fine line in these cases when someone is struggling with a task, when doing something for them may be very helpful or not helpful at all. As the song "Helping"¹ points out:

*"Some kind of help is the kind of help that helping's all about,
And some kind of help is the kind of help we all can do without."*

Then ask the children:

"Have you ever received some help that you didn't want? Without naming names, tell us about what happened."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How did you feel at the time?"

"Did your 'helper' seem to realize that you did not want his/her help?"

¹ "Helping" was written by Shel Silverstein, sung by Tom Smothers and recorded in the album entitled, "Free to Be . . . You and Me." The album was recorded by Mario Thomas and Friends, Bell Records, 1972.

Following a review, culminate by asking the children:

1. *Is there anything wrong with feeling annoyed if someone helps you when you don't want it?*
2. *Why do you think people sometimes try to help someone when the person doesn't want help?*
3. *What do you think is the best thing to do about it when someone starts to help you and you'd rather do it yourself?*
4. *What would be the best thing to do if you notice that someone seems to need help but they tell you not to help them?*

"I Reached Out To Someone When I Knew He/She Needed A Friend"

Today the children will focus on their power to positively affect the feelings of another person. Our objective in this session is to give them an opportunity to become aware of how potent their friendly propensities are and to see the value in this kind of positive behavior. Through this awareness, it is likely that friendly behavior will be reinforced in the children. Begin the session by asking them:

"Think about a time when you knew that someone needed a friend very much, possibly because they were new or because they were feeling sad about something, so you did something to show him or her that you wanted to be friends. Tell us about how you did it."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How did the person react to you when you reached out to him or her?"

"How did you feel about yourself when you did it?"

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *Sometimes we talk about the kinds of power that we have in our circle sessions. What power did we discuss today?*
2. *How does it make you feel when you are "down and out" and somebody is friendly to you?*

"When I Was The One Who Needed A Friend"

In this session the children will tell about a time when they were the ones who needed someone to show them some care and interest. Begin the session by briefly discussing with them how everyone at one time or another can be the one to reach out to someone who needs a friend and by the same token we all experience times when we are the ones in need of friendliness. Then ask them:

"Think about a time when you needed a friend. Maybe you were a new student, or you were feeling bad about something and you wanted someone to come up to you and be friendly. Tell us about the situation and what happened."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How did you feel?"

"What did you do (when Janice came up and started talking to you) or (when everybody left you alone)?"

Following a review in which the children's feelings are focused upon, culminate by asking them:

1. *When we have that "I need a friend" feeling, is it a strong feeling for most of us?*
2. *How much will it affect someone if they need a friend and you reach out to them?*
3. *If you need a friend and no one approaches you in a friendly way, what could you do?*

"When My Friend Moved Away"

Today's session provides the children with an opportunity to remember old friends who they used to enjoy knowing and to talk about how they felt when these relationships were ended. Since it is a part of life that all relationships end in one way or another, a general benefit from this session is derived from allowing the children to discuss this reality together. Begin the session by telling them what the topic is and then by asking them:

"Think of a time when a relationship that you enjoyed ended somehow. Maybe your friend moved away or maybe you were the one who moved. Tell us about what happened and how you felt about it."

As the children respond, expect and accept their sad feelings. Ask them:

"How did your friend feel?"

"How do you feel now as you remember your friend?"

In some instances a child may tell about a relationship that was ended by the death of the person who they enjoyed knowing. Respond sympathetically as you normally would and ask the child how he/she felt and feels now about it. The chance to express grief in the supporting and accepting environment of the circle will undoubtedly be appreciated by the child.

Following a review, culminate by asking the children:

1. *What are some of the things that you noticed about this session that you would like to mention?*

"I Predicted Someone's Behavior Correctly"

Today the children will discuss the matter of cause and effect in human relations and how, at times, there are some reactions in other people that can be easily predicted to certain actions that we might take toward them. (Tomorrow they will discuss how sometimes it is not so easy to predict someone else's behavior.) In this session the children will discuss how, when we know someone well, we are frequently able to guess their feelings and reactions correctly. For this reason we are in an even better position to behave considerately toward them than we are in the case of people who we do not know well. Begin this session by asking the children:

"Think about a time when you did something to someone and before, or while, you were doing it you thought to yourself about how they would react and you turned out to be right. Tell us about what you did and how they reacted."

Expect the children to tell about both positive and negative behaviors in this session. In both cases help the group to concentrate their attention on the feelings of the people involved, without letting personalities become the focus. Ask them:

"How were you feeling toward (your friend when you asked her to your party)?"

"What were the feelings that (your friend seemed to have that caused his reaction)?"

Following a review, focusing on the feelings of the individuals in each child's story, ask the children:

1. *Did the feelings of the people who we told about have anything to do with the ways in which they reacted?*
2. *Is it always possible to predict how someone will react to the things that happen to them?*
3. *Is it true that the better you know someone the easier it is to know how they will feel about things and react to them?*
4. *If this is true, is it easier or harder to treat the people we know well in ways that they will appreciate?*

"I Didn't Know He/She Would React That Way"

In this session the children will continue to discuss the matter of cause and effect in human relations. Today they will concentrate their attention on the fact that it is not always possible to be able to tell how people are going to feel and react to the things that happen to them. Very often we expect them to react the way we think we would react, but every person is an individual and responds to the world in his/her unique way. By discussing this topic the children are given an opportunity to increase their awareness of this idea. Begin the session by telling the children what the topic is and by asking them:

"Today's session is a lot like yesterday's, but today we are going to talk about a time when we thought someone would react to something that we did to him/her in a certain way, but we were wrong. Tell us about a time when you were surprised by the way that someone reacted to something that you did to him/her."

As the children respond, ask them:

"As you look back on it, how do you think the person was feeling that caused him/her to react that way?"

Following a review, culminate by asking the children:

1. *Is it always possible to tell how someone is feeling?*
2. *What is it that causes us to think that other people will react to things in certain ways?*
3. *Does the way we know we would react have anything to do with it?*
4. *If you are about to do something that will affect someone and you are not sure how they will feel or react, what could you do?*

"A Time When I Got Teased"

Teasing frequently occurs in relationships. It is a complicated issue, because there are many different reasons for teasing, and many different kinds. Sometimes it is very painful to children, and other times they even enjoy it to some extent. In this session, the children will have the opportunity to describe a way in which they were teased and how they felt when it happened. For many children, this discussion may lead to their first realization that when they tease someone they might actually be causing pain in the person. Other children may gain insights from the session regarding the ways in which they might unawaresly invite teasing to come their way. Begin the session by asking the children:

"Tell us about a time when someone teased you, without telling us who the person is."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How do you feel when you are being teased?"

"How do you usually react to the teasing?"

"Is there anything that you might be doing that encourages the teaser to tease you?"

Discuss how people who tease often don't realize that they are causing the person who is being teased to feel bad. Also the ones who are teased usually don't realize that they are "playing right into the teaser's hands" when they react strongly. By so doing they are giving the teaser the attention he/she desires and inadvertently encourage the teaser to keep it up. Often, teasers are just people who want to receive attention and can't think of any better way to relate to someone than to tease them.

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *What are some of the feelings that we told about that we got when someone teased us?*
2. *Why do you think some people tease other people?*
3. *If someone starts to tease you and you don't like it, what could you do that might be even more effective than to tell them something?*

"My Friends Tried To Make Me Do Something That I Didn't Want To Do"

Today the children will discuss the issue of peer pressure and its effects. By relating this concept to a specific time when a group of their peers tried to influence them, the children will have an opportunity to become more aware of how peer pressure operates. Through such a discussion leading to awareness, it follows that they will also have the opportunity to become more personally in charge of directing their own lives, and less given to succumbing to the will of the group. Begin the session by asking the children:

"Think of a time when you were with some of your friends, and they tried to get you to do something that you didn't want to do. It isn't necessary to tell whether or not they succeeded in getting you to do it, just tell us about what happened when they were trying to get you to do it."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How did you feel about what your friends were trying to do to you?"

"How did you feel toward yourself?"

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *Is it harder to say no to one friend when he/she wants you to do something that you don't want to do, than it is to say no to a group?*
2. *Do you have to do what your friends want you to do?*
3. *Do your friends have to do what you want them to do?*

"How I Got My Friend To Change"

Human beings affect one another. The purpose of this session is to bring this idea into the children's focus again and to give them a chance to tell about how they have been influential in the lives of other people. By so doing, the children are in a position to recognize the possibility that they are also overtly and subtly influenced by other people, especially those with whom they are friendly. Begin the session by asking them:

"Think about a time when you were responsible for making some kind of a change in some person that you are friendly with. Maybe you were able to convince them of something and change their mind or possibly they were doing something and you were able to get them to do something else that you wanted them to do. Tell us how you got your friend to change."

As the children respond, ask them:

"How were you feeling before and after you got your friend to change?"

"How was your friend feeling before and after?"

Following a review, culminate by asking the children:

1. *Can you influence other people?*
2. *Can other people influence you?*

"A Friend (Or Friends) And I Got Into Trouble"

(This topic may be particularly well-suited for dyads.)

Today the children will again have the opportunity to explore peer pressure, how it operates and possible consequences of group behavior that bothers, or harms, others in some way. Sometimes children's relationships involve daring, coercion, and the need to "impress" one another. In this session, the children will have another opportunity to explore these specific components of peer pressure. Begin the session by asking them:

"Think of a time when you got into trouble with one friend, or a group of friends. Tell us about what happened."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How did you feel when you were doing the thing that got you into trouble?"

"How did you feel when you were being criticized or punished?"

"Who did you feel like blaming?"

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *Does it make any sense, or do any good, to say, "It's not my fault; he made me do it!"?*

"How I Changed A Poor Relationship That I Had With Someone Into A Good One"

Today the children will discuss the issue of relationships that fall on rocky ground and how they can take the initiative in improving the situation. Begin the session by asking them:

"Think about a time when you weren't getting along too well with someone, but you did something to change the relationship for the better. Without naming names, tell us what you did to improve it."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How were you feeling toward the person at first?"

"How did he/she seem to be feeling toward you?"

"How do you feel now about what you did to improve the relationship?"

Following a review focusing on how the children purposefully behaved in a positive manner, ask them:

1. *When things aren't going well in a relationship, do we have to continue to do the things that are making it uncomfortable?*
2. *Did you get any ideas about how to improve a relationship from someone in the circle today?*
3. *If so, what were they?*

"How I Use The Skills I'm Learning In The Circle In Other Situations"

This final session in this unit provides an opportunity for the children to relate positive experiences that they have had in their relationships with others by telling the group about a time when they utilized some of the skills that they are learning, or knowledge that they are gaining, from participation in the Human Development Program. By telling about an instance of this nature they will be reinforcing themselves positively for this kind of transfer of training and indirectly suggesting a number of ways to relate effectively with others to their peers in the circle. Begin the session by asking the children:

"We've been talking in the circle about getting along with other people. Today I'd like for you to think about some situation away from the circle when you may have used some of the communication skills that we've been learning in the circle, like listening carefully or openly speaking your thoughts and feelings. Or perhaps in some situation you remembered something that you learned in the circle about yourself, or about people in general, that helped you in the situation. Tell us about what you did and how you did it."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How were you feeling at the time?"

"How was the other person (or people) feeling?"

"How do you feel now as you look back on the experience?"

Following a review in which the children's positive behavior is focused upon, culminate the session by asking them:

1. *What are some ideas that you may have gotten from this session or from any other session, about ways to use what we are learning in the circle sessions in other situations with other people?*

SUPPLEMENTARY ACTIVITIES RELATED TO RELATIONSHIPS:

Practicing Friendly Behavior

This activity is like "Secret Pals." However, it is for one day only and is called "*Secret Friends For The Day.*" Every Tuesday and Thursday allow each of the children to draw a name (without looking) of one of his/her classmates. The name drawn is the child's "secret friend for the day."

Tell the children that the object of this activity is for them to do friendly things for the person who is their secret friend, but to try not to let it be known to the person that you are his/her secret friend. Tell them that if they keep from doing something friendly for the person as a means for keeping their secret, it won't count. (Phony friendliness won't count either.) The children will soon find that they will need to do many friendly things for a lot of their classmates so it won't be obvious to their secret friend that he/she's the one.

Before going home at the end of the day, each child will stand up individually and make a guess, naming the person they think drew their name. If they are right the child should acknowledge it. If they are not right, ask the class, "*Will the real secret friend of (Andy Wong) please stand up!*" The child will then reveal who he/she is.

Before drawing names in the morning, take the names of children who are absent out of the drawing box. Why not put your name in and draw out a name each time too?

Suggest to the children that they have an opportunity to *practice* friendliness with each other on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

History: Learning About Famous Friendships

Ask the children to investigate some of the friendships of famous persons of the past, such as the friendships that existed between Naomi and Ruth (recorded in the Book of Ruth in the Old Testament of the Bible), John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, Capt. Meriwether Lewis and Lt. William Clark, Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Adlai Stevenson and Eleanor Roosevelt, to name a few. Ask them to find out why these people were such good friends and how they contributed to each other's lives. They may report their findings to the class in oral, or written form.

Communicating Openly About Helping

Ask the children to start being alert to opportunities for helping each other in the classroom and on the playground. Urge them to ask each other:

"Would you please give me a hand?"

"Could you use some help?"

"How can I help you?"

Creative Dramatics: When Things Go Wrong ("Before"), And Practicing Prosocial Behavior ("After")

Select four children, one to be in charge of presenting each of the following "Before and After" dramas to the class. Each child chosen should have a firm grasp of the meaning of the scenes to be enacted and should select one or more children to role play the parts of the other characters in the drama. (Ask them to select children who have not as yet participated in any role play situations.) The children should have a period of time before the class presentation to create and rehearse their extemporaneous dramas, the "children in charge" serving as directors. Tell the children that they may use pantomime and may talk to the audience during the scenes to let it be known what they are thinking and feeling at various points.

Before each group presents their drama the child who is in charge should introduce it to the class, briefly describing the setting and the roles that the children will be playing.

THE "BEFORE AND AFTER" DRAMAS:

I. Inappropriate Helping

Before: One person tries to help another who doesn't want it. The first person persists.

After: The first person tries to help the second person, but when the second person objects, he/she allows the second person to struggle on his/her own.

II. Teasing

Before: One person teases another and the one who is teased responds in some vehement manner.

After: The same person teases the other, but this time the one who is teased ignores the teaser, who in turn gradually loses his/her urge to keep teasing.

III. Changing A Relationship

Before: Two people are having a mild disagreement that gradually gets worse. They leave each other being angry and the next time they see each other they are unpleasant to one another.

After: The two people are having a mild disagreement and it gradually gets worse. Suddenly one person stops tearing the other person down and does something to change the flavor of the interaction for the better. The two people part as friends and behave agreeably with each other the next time they meet. (*Allow the children to be creative. Several scenes showing a number of possible alternatives may be demonstrated.*)

After each drama has been presented, ask the class:

1. *How would you have felt (as each character in each scene)?*
2. *What are some other responses that you can think of that might be appropriate and effective ways to handle (each "before" situation)?*

Fruitful discussions are likely to result. Finally, ask the children:

"We've been calling these scenes in our dramas 'before' and 'after' scenes. What do you think this means? 'Before' and 'after' what?"

Guide a discussion relative to the notion that the "before" and "after" relate to "stopping to think"! The effective "After" behaviors occur *after* the person uses his/her ability to take stock of the situation and accordingly change his/her behavior in a deliberate, conscious manner.

Creative Dramatics: Dealing With Peer Pressure

Ask a group of children to extemporaneously role play the following situation for the class:

SCENE ONE: A group of children, who are friends, are together. One of them gets an idea and asks another to do something that would get the child into trouble if he/she were caught doing it. All of the other children agree that the child should do it, except for one, who says nothing at first. The other children however, keep urging the child to do the thing that would get him/her into trouble. Finally the child who did not join the group in its urgings, speaks up and tells the group that he/she feels bad about what is happening. Despite this, the child who was put under pressure agrees to do the action the group wants and leaves to go do it.

SCENE TWO: The child returns and tells the group that he/she did get into trouble and begins to blame it on the group. At this point, the group deserts him/her — all except for the child who did not join in with the urgings. To this child the child who got into trouble, complains and talks about how sorry he/she feels for him/herself, while the other child listens acceptingly.

Allow the children who will be doing the drama to rehearse for a period of time before their presentation. They may give each character in the drama a name and may decide on such factors as setting and the action the key character does that gets him/her into trouble.

Following the presentation, conduct a class discussion, asking the following questions:

"Who was responsible when (Sandra) got into trouble?"

"Did (she) have any responsibility in it?"

"What do you think of (her) decision to go along with the group?"

"Who showed the most courage to act according to his/her thoughts and feelings?"

"Why was it so hard for (Sandra) to say, 'No' to the group?"

"What do you think would have happened if (Sandra) had not done what the group wanted (her) to do?"

"What would be worse, getting into trouble, or facing possible rejection from the group when it wants you to do something that you refuse to do?"

Discussion, Role Play And Creative Writing: Exploring More Subtle Versions Of Peer Pressure

In the above activity, the children explore the dynamics of a blatant example of peer pressure. Very often, however, peer pressure is less obvious. Initiate a discussion with the class about how peer pressure can influence behavior in subtle ways by asking them:

"Sometimes people want someone to do (or try) something and the person really doesn't care very much one way or another if they do it (or try it) or not. Can you think of something that some children your age or older, have done because all their friends were doing it?"

The children may suggest such things as: going along with fads, like wearing certain clothes, using certain slang words, smoking cigarettes, or "picking on" (scapegoating) one unfortunate individual.

Be sure to keep the discussion general. If children wish to give personal examples, these should be accepted, but not directly solicited. As the children think of more subtle examples of

peer pressure that involve willing imitation, rather than responding to coercion, allow them to role play, in an impromptu (on the spot) fashion, the examples that they have thought of. The object of each scene that the children role play should be to simply demonstrate how one person copies what the others are doing. (Be willing to play a part in the children's brief dramas, thereby furnishing encouragement and, if needed, a few suggestions to them as they create their demonstrations.)

After the discussion and role playing of these subtle forms of peer pressure, ask the children:

1. *Is going along with the group always the right thing to do?*
2. *Is it always the wrong thing to do?*
3. *When do you think it is right and when do you think it is wrong?*

A follow-up activity to this discussion involves creative writing. Ask the children to write a story about an imaginary child who is their same age and sex, who does one or more things because his/her friends are doing them, but who, at some point, decides not to do something that the group is doing. Ask the children to describe the situations that are a part of the story, the feelings of their fictitious character and what happens when he/she decides not to copy what the group is doing.

UNIT VIII

AWARENESS: EXPLORING FEELINGS

As human beings we are very special. We behave and experience consciousness as all animals do, but humankind is capable of intellectual experience beyond that of the other animals. We also experience a more varied and intricate emotional life. While we know that other animals do experience some of the emotions, and we have seen them learn, and even use reason and acquire skills, up until now only human beings express their ideas and feelings in verbal language. It is a theoretical assumption of the Human Development Program that verbal interaction is one key vehicle by which we maintain and enhance our mental health, as we share, explore, sort out and deal with our feelings and thoughts with one another.

This Awareness unit focuses directly on the wide range of emotional experiences that we human beings have. Through verbal interaction the participants will have the opportunity to become aware that they experience all of the emotions and so do other people, and that emotions themselves are neither good nor bad, moral nor immoral. When we realize that we are not the only ones who have ever become surprised, confused, angry, jealous, or other, it is an eye-opening experience and can positively affect the ways in which we regard ourselves. It is particularly enlightening for children to find out that adults, especially teachers, are human too! They appreciate it when you share with them in the circle because then they can identify with you.

While exploring the emotions, this unit also calls the attention of the children to the ways that feelings and behavior affect each other, how sometimes we have mixed feelings, how our bodies respond naturally to our emotions (such as a lump in the throat when our feelings have been hurt). The unit also emphasizes how our feelings and behaviors can affect those of other people and vice-versa, and wherever possible the value of making choices, as opposed to responding mechanistically, is addressed.

Since this is a long unit, you may at times decide to shift to another one and complete it and then return to this one. Your own knowledge of the readiness level and the needs of your group will be your best guide.

Topics for Exploring Feelings

"A Time When I Felt Happy"

"A Time When I Was Too Hot or Too Cold"

"Once When I Was Physically Injured"

"A Time When I Felt Shy"

"A Time When I Was Feeling Hopeful"

"A Time When I Felt Bored"

"A Time When I Had Suspicious Feelings"

"A Time When I Felt Relaxed"

"A Time When I Felt Uneasy"

"Once When I Was Feeling Confused"

"A Time When I Was Amused"
"Once When I Was Feeling Dependent"
"Once When I Was Feeling Independent"
"A Time When I Had Protective Feelings"
"A Time When I Had Possessive Feelings"
"Once When I Was Feeling Optimistic"
"Once When I Was Feeling Pessimistic"
"A Time When I Was Feeling Involved"
"A Time When I Was Feeling Uninvolved"
"A Time When I Felt That I Was Worthless"
"A Time When I Felt That I Was Important"
"A Time When I Was Feeling Lonely"
"Once When I Got Embarrassed"
"Once When I Felt Excited About Something"
"A Time When I Felt Awkward"
"A Time When I Was Scared"
"Once When I Was Feeling Patient"
"Once When I Became Frustrated"
"A Time When I Got Jealous"
"Once When I Became Irritated"
"A Time When I Felt Like I Belonged"
"A Time When I Got Angry"
"A Time When My Feelings Were Hurt"
"A Time When I Felt Sorry for Myself"
"A Time When I Felt Sad"
"A Time When I Felt Grateful"
"A Time When I Felt Like Getting Revenge"
"A Time When I Became Self-Conscious"
"A Time When I Experienced Relief"
"Once When I Felt Guilty"

"A Time When I Felt Powerful"

"A Time When I Felt Hateful"

"Once When I Was Feeling Loved"

"A Time When I Felt Loving"

"A Time When I Felt Happy"

This unit begins on a positive note. Although this topic was discussed before in the beginning of the program it is always a positive experience for the children to talk about times when they experienced contentment and joy. Therefore, it can be effectively repeated many times. Begin this session by asking the children:

"Think about a time when you felt happy. Tell us about where you were and what was happening."

As the children participate, ask them:

"Did you have any other feelings at that time too?"

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *Did we all seem to feel happy in exactly the same way?*
2. *What were some of the differences that you noticed?*

"A Time When I Was Too Hot Or Too Cold"

Most people appreciate an opportunity to talk about their physical discomforts and the emotional feelings they have that accompany them. Today the children will have a chance to do just this. Begin the session by asking them:

"Think about a time when you were too hot or too cold. Try to remember where you were and what was happening. Tell us about it."

As the children participate, ask them:

"Did 'being too hot or too cold' cause any other feelings?"

"How did you react to 'being too hot or too cold'?"

Following a review, culminate by asking the children:

1. *If someone near you says that they are too hot or too cold, but you aren't, is there something wrong with him/her, or with you?*
2. *Is everyone comfortable at exactly the same temperature?*

"Once When I Was Physically Injured"

Today's topic will provide an opportunity for the children to talk about a time when they sustained an injury, and how they felt about it. Begin the session by asking them:

"Think about a time when your body got hurt in some way. Tell us about the injury and what caused it."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How did you feel about (spraining your ankle)?"

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *When something happens to our bodies, can it affect the way we feel in general?*

"A Time When I Felt Shy"

Everybody, at one time or another, does not feel like being outgoing. Today the children will have the opportunity to talk about situations that they have experienced that brought about shy or bashful feelings in them. Begin the session by asking them:

"Were you ever in a situation where you did not want to say or do anything because you were feeling bashful or shy? Tell us about the situation."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How did your body feel when you were feeling shy?"

"What did you do?"

If the response to the latter question is "nothing," ask the children

"Is doing nothing a behavior? And if so, what is it like?"

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *Were there any similar circumstances in the situations that we were in that may have contributed to causing shyness?*
2. *What were some similarities and differences that you noticed in our behaviors when we were feeling shy?*
3. *Do you think that sometimes people act like they are feeling comfortable in a situation when they are really feeling shy?*

"A Time When I Was Feeling Hopeful"

This topic will afford the children with an opportunity to discuss feelings of hope that they have had, and other possible feelings that may have accompanied their hopeful feelings. Begin the session by asking them:

"Think about a time when you wanted something very much and you thought that you might have a chance of getting what you wanted . . . You were very hopeful that your wish would come true. Tell us about it."

As the children participate, do not become overly involved in discussions related to whether or not they received the thing they hoped for. Rather, help them to focus on their feelings by asking:

"How did your body feel when you were hopeful?"

"What other kinds of feelings did you have?"

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *Even though at times we do suffer disappointments, is it still worthwhile to be hopeful?*
2. *How do you think it would affect someone if they stopped hoping for the things (or goals) that they want?*

"A Time When I Felt Bored"

Boredom is often a very difficult emotion to handle. By discussing it, the children will have a chance to increase their awareness that everyone gets bored at one time or another, and that there are things that they might be able to do about it the next time they start to feel bored. Begin the session by asking them:

"Think about a time when you didn't feel like paying attention to, or getting involved in, the things that were going on around you because they didn't seem to be interesting enough. Tell us about it."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How did you behave when you were feeling bored?"

"Were you having any other feelings too? If so, what were they?"

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *Who is responsible for it when you become bored?*
2. *What are some ways that you can think of that might help you to end boredom?*

"A Time When I Had Suspicious Feelings"

Today the children will have an opportunity to discuss how they suspected that something was going on that someone may have been trying to hide, even though they had no proof. Begin the session by asking them:

"Think about a time when you were sure that something was happening, but no one would admit it . . . You were suspicious that something was going on 'behind your back'. Tell us about it."

As the children participate, ask them:

"What did you say, and what did you do, when you were feeling suspicious?"

"Was it a comfortable feeling?"

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *In what ways might suspicious feelings be helpful?*
2. *Are suspicions ever imagined?*

"A Time When I Felt Relaxed"

In this session the children will be able to talk about their feelings of comfort and security. Begin the session by asking them:

"Think about a time when you weren't upset or worried about anything. You felt relaxed and happy about everything that was going on. Tell us about it."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How were you behaving when you were feeling relaxed?"

"What kinds of thoughts were you having?"

Following a review, culminate by asking the children:

1. *Do people tend to relax more in some situations than in others?*
2. *If you want to relax, or help someone else to relax, what are some things that you can do?*

"A Time When I Felt Uneasy"

Today the children will talk about a time when they were feeling uneasy, rather than comfortable or relaxed. Begin the session by asking:

"Think of a time when you were feeling uneasy about something. . . when it was hard for you to relax, or to forget about something that may have been bothering you. Tell us about the way you felt."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How did your body feel?"

"What did you do?"

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *Are uneasy feelings ever useful?*
2. *Does it help us to allow ourselves to be uneasy about some problem that we cannot possibly change?*

"Once When I Was Feeling Confused"

Today the children will have the opportunity to tell about a time when they were confused about something, and to hear about how you and the other children became confused too. Because we sometimes "put ourselves down" when we are confused, it is important to realize that it is a universal phenomenon. Begin the session by asking the children:

"Think about a time when you weren't sure about something. It may have been something that you were trying to do, or something that was going on around you that you didn't understand and you felt confused. Tell us about what was happening and how you felt."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How did you behave when you were feeling confused?"

"How did you feel about yourself?"

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *Do you think there is something you could do when you become confused?*
2. *If someone else seems to be confused, is there something that you could do to help?*

"A Time When I Was Amused"

It is an enjoyable experience indeed to talk about a time when something funny happened. Today the children will have the opportunity to do this again. Begin the session by asking them:

"Think about a time when something funny happened, and your feeling was one of amusement. Tell us about what happened."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How did your body react when you were amused?"

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *What similarities did you notice in the things that amused us?*
2. *Does everyone become amused at the very same things to the same degree?*

"Once When I Was Feeling Dependent"

Issues involving dependence and independence are important ones for children. It is helpful for them to realize, as they struggle toward independence, that everyone feels like being dependent sometimes. Begin the session by asking them:

"Think about a time when you were feeling like you were up against a situation that you couldn't handle all by yourself. You wanted to have someone take over for you and you wanted to depend on them to do it. Tell us about it."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How did you feel about the situation?"

"How did you feel about yourself?"

Following a review, culminate by asking the children:

1. *Do people ever reach an age when they no longer feel dependent on someone else at any time?*

"Once When I Was Feeling Independent"

Today the children will balance the picture by telling about a time when they felt independent. Begin the session by asking them:

"Think about a time when you were involved in some kind of situation you knew you could handle all by yourself, and you didn't need, or want, help from anyone else . . . You knew you could take care of things independently. Tell us about it."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How did you feel about yourself when you were handling the situation independently?"

"How did you handle it?"

"What other feelings did you have?"

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *Do we ever become fully and completely independent?*
2. *Why do you think independence is something that people, in general, value highly?*

"A Time When I Had Protective Feelings"

Today the children will have the opportunity to talk about a time when they felt like they wanted to protect, or take care of, someone, or something, such as an animal. Begin the session by asking them:

"Think of a time when you were with some person, or animal, or maybe even something like a plant, that you wanted to protect . . . Perhaps in some way there was some threat to the person, or thing, that you were with. Tell us about what was happening."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How did you feel toward the (children who were throwing rocks at the cat)?"

"How did you feel toward yourself (when you rescued it)?"

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *What were some of the similarities and differences that you noticed in the situations that we told about and the feelings that we had?*

"A Time When I Had Possessive Feelings"

This activity relates to yesterday's session when the children talked about having protective feelings. Today, however, they will discuss the more extreme attitude of possessiveness. Begin the session by asking them:

"Sometimes people have possessive feelings about things, or animals, or even other people. Think about a time when you wanted something to be your very own, or to be completely under your control. Tell us about it."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How did (your friends seems to feel when you did not want them to touch your new dog)?"

"How did you feel about yourself?"

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *Do you think that protective feelings can lead to possessive ones?*
2. *Has anyone ever been possessive with you? Maybe they wanted to possess something that you wanted to share, or maybe they wanted to possess you, (like they didn't want you to have any other friends, except for them). What kind of feelings did you get as a result of their behavior?*

"Once When I Was Feeling Optimistic"

In this and tomorrow's session, the children will discuss the attitudinal polarities, optimism and pessimism. They will discuss times when they personally experienced both feelings. Begin the session by asking them:

"Think about some situation that you were involved in where there was something being planned, or worked on, and you felt that the results were going to be good . . . You felt optimistic about the outcome. Tell us about it."

As the children participate, ask them:

"Did the way the other people feel have any effect on you?"

"Did your optimism seem to have any effect on the way they felt?"

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. Do you think being optimistic about something helps to bring about positive results?
2. What were some of the similarities and differences that you noticed in the situations that we described that caused us to feel optimistic?

"Once When I Was Feeling Pessimistic"

Today the children will talk about pessimistic feelings that they have had. Begin the session by asking them:

"Think about a time when you were involved in some kind of an effort that seemed to you to be going poorly, and you felt rather pessimistic about the outcome . . . You didn't expect the results to be too good. Tell us about it."

As the children participate, ask them:

"Did the feelings of the other people who were involved in the situation affect you?"

"Did your feelings seem to influence them in any way?"

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. Do the pessimistic, or optimistic, feelings that people have about something seem to have any influence on the outcome?

"A Time When I Was Feeling Involved"

Today the children will have an opportunity to focus on the kinds of feelings that they get when they are very involved in some kind of activity. Begin the session by asking them:

"Think about a time when you were doing something. It could have been some kind of game that you were playing, or some kind of work that you were doing that you were concentrating on very hard . . . and while you were doing it, you weren't thinking about anything else except what you were doing. Tell us about it."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How do you feel about being deeply involved in something?"

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *Does everyone seem to become involved in doing the very same activity?*
2. *What are some of the similarities and differences that you noticed in the things that we told about, and the levels of involvement, that we described?*

"A Time When I Was Feeling Uninvolved"

Today's session offers the children the opportunity to talk about a time when they were feeling distant, or uninvolved, from some situation. Begin the session by asking them:

"Think about a time when something was going on around you, but for some reason, you were feeling uninvolved. Tell us about it."

As the children participate, ask them:

"What other kinds of feelings did you have when you were feeling uninvolved that may have kept you from involving yourself?"

"How were you behaving?"

"Did anything happen to change your feelings? If so, what?"

Following a review, culminate by asking the children:

1. *Is it possible for us to choose to become involved or not to become involved?*
2. *Who might be in a good position to do something about it when you are feeling uninvolved?*

"A Time When I Felt That I Was Worthless"

(Due to the complex nature of this topic, it should be led by an adult, rather than a child leader.)

At the outset of this session it is important to reiterate that the Human Development Program holds to the theoretical assumption that all people are valuable and important. They are *never* worthless. Only destructive behaviors (in the sense that they are hurtful and/or maladaptive) are of no value. Therefore when someone tells about feeling worthless, our attitude is that they are confused. Their feelings are real, but their conclusions are incorrect. The person has downgraded him/herself as a result of some experience.

■ The purpose of this session is to help the children to understand that *they are okay*, even though they may be told that they aren't by some outside influence, or even if they are feeling bad about themselves because they know that their behavior isn't always okay. Besides learning about this concept, this session will provide the children with increased awareness of the understanding that they aren't the only ones who have these kinds of negative feelings about themselves, as they listen to your statement and the statements of the other children.

Begin the session by asking them:

"Have you ever had the feeling that you are a worthless, or a bad person, because of something that happened? Tell us about the feeling and about what happened."

As the children participate, ask them:

"Was it hard to remember that you are a very okay person when you were feeling that way?"

"How did feeling worthless affect your behavior — what did you do and say?"

Discuss together how this kind of feeling is nothing more than that — *it's only a feeling. It does not reflect reality.* Generally, when we feel this way, it seems so real and the feeling is very strong. It is important, however, to try to remember that the feeling will, in time, go away and there might be some things that we can remind ourselves of that will help us to get rid of it.

Following a review, culminate by asking the children:

1. *Are you a worthless, or a bad, person if someone says so?*
2. *Are you a worthless, or a bad person if you do something that you or someone else thinks is a bad thing?*
3. *What is something that we need to remember to tell ourselves when we are "caught up" in feelings like this?*

"A Time When I Felt That I Was Important"

Since the Human Development Program stresses the fact that every human being *is* important, the children will today be talking about reality. *They are important!* Discuss this fact with them at the outset. Then ask them:

"Think about a time when you were feeling very good about yourself. Possibly it was a moment when you realized just how important you are. Tell us about it."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How does your body feel when you are aware of how important you are?"

"How do you feel right now as you realize how important you are?"

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *If you are important, does that mean that other people are important too?*

"A Time When I Was Feeling Lonely"

Loneliness is a recurring universal condition, and something everyone has to face, and deal with, at one time or another. It should be made clear that today we are not talking about "alone times" that can, and often are, very pleasant. Rather we are focusing on the kinds of feelings we get when we wish we weren't all by ourselves. Begin the session by asking the children:

"Think about a time when you were all alone and you didn't want to be . . . A time when you were feeling lonely. Tell us about it."

As the children participate, ask them:

"What other kinds of feelings did you have when you were feeling lonely?"

"What did you do?"

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *What are some things that we can do for ourselves when we are feeling lonely?*
2. *Is loneliness something that can always be avoided?*

"Once When I Got Embarrassed"

This session will undoubtedly bring about a great deal of laughter and giggling among the children. When embarrassing moments occur, they produce feelings that, when recalled later, seek resolution in physical discharge. Therefore, the laughter is not only an inescapable component of this session, but actually a helpful, positive outcome. Begin the session by briefly discussing with the children how everyone gets embarrassed at one time or another. Then ask them:

"Think about a time when something happened to you that embarrassed you. If it wouldn't give you bad feelings to tell us about it, we would like to know what happened and how you felt."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How did you behave when you were embarrassed?"

"How do you feel about the embarrassing incident now?"

Discuss with the children how embarrassment, like feeling worthless, is only just a feeling and need not permanently affect future behavior unless we let it.

Culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *If you try something that doesn't work and you get embarrassed, do you think that you should never try it again?*

"Once When I Felt Excited About Something"

This is an engaging topic. It will give the children an opportunity to tell each other about things that they felt very stimulated and enthused about. Begin the session by asking them:

"Think about a time when you got very excited about something. It could have been something that you were going to do, or something that was happening to you at that moment. Tell us about what it was."

As the children participate, ask them:

"Did your excitement lead to any other kinds of feelings?"

"How did you show your excitement?"

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *Did all of us get excited in exactly the same way?*

"A Time When I Felt Awkward"

Everyone feels awkward at one time or another, particularly children. In fact, this is an issue that sixth graders will undoubtedly face on an increasing basis as they continue to interact with others in new ways. The important emphasis in this session, as it is in several others, is to remind the children that feeling awkward is *just a feeling*, and it would be unfortunate if these feelings inhibited them from trying new modes of expressing themselves in the future. Begin this session by asking them:

"Think of a time when you were trying to do something, but you didn't feel very good about the way you were doing it . . . You felt as though you were being awkward. Tell us about it."

As the children participate, ask them:

"What other feelings did you have?"

"Did other people seem to feel that you were being awkward?"

Culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *What do you think causes awkwardness?*
2. *Can it ever be completely avoided?*
3. *If we feel awkward when we try something, do you think we should keep from ever trying it again?*

"A Time When I Was Scared"

Fear comes in many forms. Today the children will have the opportunity to tell about times when they were frightened and to realize that everyone experiences fear at one time or other. Begin the session by asking them:

"Think of a time when you were scared. It could have been a mild, anxious feeling that you got about something that might have happened, or possibly you were frightened about something that did happen, or maybe you were even terrified by something like a dream. Tell us about what it was."

As the children participate, ask them:

"What happened to your body when you were scared?"

"When you look back on the thing that scared you, how do you feel about it now?"

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *Do you think that there may be some reason why people get scared that helps them in some way? If so, what is it?*
2. *We may realize that fear can be a signal to us to stay away from something dangerous, or to keep us from doing something that may be harmful. However, do you think that it is necessary for us to stay away from, or keep from doing, everything that gives us fearful feelings?*

"Once When I Was Feeling Patient"

Today the children will have an opportunity to tell about a time when they were feeling very tolerant and patient. Begin the session by asking them:

"Think about a time when you were feeling very relaxed and patient with some person, or some thing, in a particular situation. Tell us about it."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How did the other people seem to react to your patience?"

"How did you feel about yourself when you were being patient?"

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *Is it possible for us to choose to behave in a patient manner?*

"Once When I Became Frustrated"

Frustration is a common emotion that all of us have to deal with frequently. Today the children will have a chance to talk about times when they were frustrated and to realize that other people get frustrated too. Begin the session by asking them:

"Think about a time when you became very annoyed about the way things were going. Possibly you were trying to accomplish something and it seemed to be very difficult for you so you became frustrated. Tell us about what was happening."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How did you behave when you were feeling frustrated?"

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *Do the very same conditions frustrate all people in the very same ways?*
2. *If someone becomes frustrated by some condition that doesn't frustrate you, is there something wrong with that person or with you?*
3. *What do you think is a responsible way to handle a situation when you become frustrated?*

"A Time When I Got Jealous"

(It is recommended that this topic be led by an adult, rather than a child leader.)

Jealousy is usually a very unwelcome emotion that everyone experiences at one time or another. Today the children will have the opportunity to become aware that not only have they experienced the emotion of jealousy, but that other people have too. Begin the session by asking them:

"Think about a time when you felt jealous of someone because they had something, or got to do something, that you wanted to have, or do, very much. Tell us about the situation."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How did you behave when you were feeling jealous?"

"What were some of your thoughts?"

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *Is there something wrong, or bad, about a person who feels jealous?*
2. *What do you think are some responsible ways to behave when you are jealous that won't hurt you, or anyone else?*

"Once When I Became Irritated"

Irritability is a fairly common condition that everyone experiences in themselves and in others at times. It is closely related to frustration, but today, the children will focus on the bodily sensations that accompany irritability. Begin the session by asking them:

"Think of a time when you were feeling uncomfortable and irritable. It could have been about something that was happening around you, or it might have been because of a feeling that you were having, such as being tired, or hungry, or unable to get something that you needed, or maybe even because of the way someone was treating you. Tell us about what caused you to be irritable."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How did your body feel when you were irritable?"

"How did you behave?"

"How did other people react toward you?"

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *While some people may be more prone to be irritable more often than others, is there something wrong with, or bad, about a person if they get irritable sometimes?*
2. *What do you think are some things that you could do about it when you realize that you are becoming irritated?*
3. *How do you think people would like for you to treat them when they are irritated?*

"A Time When I Felt Like I Belonged"

It is important for us all, especially children, to feel like we belong in the place where we want to be. It is a particularly comfortable and secure feeling. Begin the session by asking them:

"Think about a time when you were with someone, or some group, who you liked being with, and you knew they liked having you there with them . . . You felt like you really belonged. Tell us about the situation."

As the children participate, ask them:

"Did you feel that it was really okay to be yourself in that situation?"

"What was your behavior like?"

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *What are some of the ways that you can help others to feel like they belong?*

"A Time When I Got Angry"

Anger is another universal emotion that results from a wide variety of causes and expresses itself in a variety of forms and degrees. Today the children will have an opportunity to explore together, some of the conditions that caused them to become angry, (miffed, resentful, hostile, furious, etc.). Begin the session by asking them:

"Think of a time when you got angry about something. Tell us about it."

As the children participate, ask them:

"What happened to your body when you got angry?"

"What did you say and what did you do?"

"What did you want to have happen?"

Following a review, culminate by asking the children:

1. *What are some of the similarities and differences that you may have noticed in the situations that caused anger in us and the degrees to which we got angry?*
2. *What can you do when you're angry that you ordinarily don't do?*

"A Time When My Feelings Were Hurt"

(It is recommended that this topic be led by an adult, rather than a child leader.)

This topic relates to one of the most sensitive parts of every human being. The painful emotions that result from insult, ridicule, humiliation, or the like, are indeed deep and very often these feelings are hard to forget. By discussing this topic, the children will have the opportunity to increase their awareness that it is possible for every person to get his/her feelings hurt. Begin the session by asking them:

"Think of a time when someone (it isn't important who) hurt your feelings. Tell us about how it happened."

As the children participate, ask them:

"When you had your feelings hurt, how did your body react?"

"What did you say and what did you do?"

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *What are some of the main things that you could avoid doing to other people when you don't want to hurt their feelings?*
2. *What do you think might be something that you could do if you have hurt someone's feelings?*

"A Time When I Felt Sorry For Myself"

This topic is closely related to the prior topic that addresses the issue of hurt feelings. Sometimes when our feelings get hurt we start to feel sorry for ourselves. While this is natural to some degree, it can be a maladaptive behavioral reaction if the feelings of self pity become

magnified to the extent that we fail to gain any insight from the incident and hang onto feelings of persecution. Briefly discuss these ideas with the children. Then ask them:

"Can you think of a time when you were feeling very sorry for yourself because of some sort of unfortunate thing that may have happened to you? Tell us about it."

As the children participate, ask them:

"Did it seem to help you in any way to continue to pity yourself?"

"How did other people seem to react to you when you were feeling this way?"

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *If we feel very bad about something, what is a possible thing that we could do that might be better for ourselves than to hold onto feelings of self-pity?*

"A Time When I Felt Sad"

(It is recommended that this topic be led by an adult, rather than a child leader.)

Misfortune and tragedy are an inescapable part of life. Everyone feels sad about something at some time or other. Today the children will have a chance to talk about this reality. Begin the session by asking them:

"Think about a time when you felt sad. Tell us about it."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How did your body feel when you were sad?"

"What did your body do?"

Discuss how frequently we cry when we feel sad, and how the crying is the way that we naturally get rid of the hurt. As the song, "It's All Right To Cry"¹ says:

*"It's all right to cry
Crying takes the sad out of you
It's all right to cry,
It might make you feel better!"*

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *What are some of the things that you noticed about this session that you would like to mention?*

"A Time When I Felt Grateful"

This topic is offered at this point as a break in a series of complex topics that are negative in tone. Begin the session by asking the children:

"Think of a time when you felt grateful to someone because they did something for you, or said something to you or about you, that pleased you very much. It may have been something that helped you with a problem or something that made you very happy. Tell us how they pleased you and the way you felt when they did it."

¹ "It's All Right To Cry" was written by Carol Hall, sung by Rosey Grier and recorded on the album, "Free to Be . . . You and Me."

See also: *The Human Side of Human Beings: The Theory of Re-evaluation Counseling*, by Harvey Jackins, Rational Island Publishers, Seattle, (First paperback printing, July, 1972).

As the children respond, ask each one:

"What did you say to the person you felt grateful to?"

"How did the person seem to feel when he/she could tell that you were grateful (or pleased)?"

Review as a group what each child said. Then culminate by asking the children:

1. *How does it usually seem to make people feel when someone tells them "Thank you" for what they did or said?*

"A Time When I Felt Like Getting Revenge"

(It is recommended that this topic be led by an adult, rather than a child leader.)

The gut level feelings that prompt human beings to take revenge on one another are usually very strong and compelling. By discussing the urge to take revenge the children will be exposed to its universality and will also be in a position to look deeper into the matter. In this session they will be given a chance to ponder the critical difference between feeling vengeful and doing vengeful acts. They will see how vengeance expresses itself, what the results are, and how the cycle of vengeance may be broken. Begin the session by asking the children:

"Think of a time when you felt like 'getting even' with someone for something that they did that bothered, or hurt you, in some way. Tell us about what happened, without telling who the person was, and how you felt."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How do you think the other person felt after he/she did that to you?"

"What did you do and say when you were having the vengeful feelings?"

"If you retaliated, what happened then?"

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *Are you a bad person if you have vengeful feelings?*
2. *What good does it do a person to get revenge?*
3. *Who is responsible for stopping a situation in which you and someone else keep getting revenge on one another?*

"A Time When I Became Self-Conscious"

We all become self-conscious at one time or other, particularly when we are young. Therefore, this topic is a particularly important one for the children to discuss. Begin the session by asking them:

"Think about a time when you became self-conscious . . . You started thinking about how you looked, or how you were behaving when you were with others, and maybe you were afraid that they would think that you weren't good enough. Tell us about it."

As the children participate, ask them:

"When you were feeling self-conscious, was it possible to think about anything else?"

"Did feeling self-conscious help you to behave the way you wanted to behave, or look the way you wanted to look?"

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *What do you think you might try the next time you realize that you are starting to feel self-conscious?*
2. *Do you think that perhaps some people may be feeling self-conscious, at times, but they just don't show it?*

"A Time When I Experienced Relief"

This session will provide the children with an opportunity to briefly re-live some tense situation and the feelings that they got when they were relieved. Expect laughter and other forms of physical discharge that generally accompany relief. Begin the session by asking them:

"Think about a time when you were quite worried, or tense, about something that you were afraid might happen, but it didn't happen after all and you were relieved. Tell us about it."

As the children participate, ask them:

"When you were relieved, what happened to your body?"

"How did you behave when the feelings of relief came?"

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *What are some of the things that you noticed about this session?*

"Once When I Felt Guilty"

(It is recommended that this session be led by an adult, rather than a child leader.)

Guilt is another unwelcome, universal, human emotion that seems to be unavoidable. All of us at one time or another have felt remorseful about something. Briefly discuss this idea with the children and then ask them:

"Think about a time when you felt guilty about something. Tell us about it."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How did you behave when you felt guilty?"

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *Does it help to remember the things that we did that caused us to feel guilty?*
2. *Does it help to continue to be angry with ourselves after we have made a mistake?*

"A Time When I Felt Powerful"

This session will give each child a chance to talk about feelings of effectiveness and ability to overcome obstacles that they have had. The emphasis in this session should be on times when they used their power constructively. Briefly discuss with the children how our power and effort can be used for positive, or negative results. Then ask them:

"Think about a time when you were feeling very strong and powerful, so you did something that you knew would help someone or yourself, in some way. Tell us about it."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How did your body feel when you felt powerful?"

"How did other people seem to react to your feelings and behavior?"

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *Do powerful feelings just happen by accident or, is there some way that we can choose to be strong and capable? What do you think?*

"A Time When I Felt Hateful"

(It is recommended that this topic be led by an adult, rather than a child leader.)

Like jealousy, anger, and guilt, hateful feelings are inevitable in human experience, although they may be most unwelcome when they occur. Briefly discuss with the children, how someone who has hateful feelings, or hateful thoughts for a period of time, is not a bad person. If, however, they were to do a hateful action, then we would no doubt call it a bad behavior. Much of the tragedy in the world is brought about by the hateful actions that people do to one another. Begin the session by asking the children:

"Think about a time when you felt hateful toward some condition, or some person. (If it was a person, please don't tell us who it was.) Just tell us about the situation and your feelings."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How did you feel about yourself when you were having hateful feelings?"

"How did your body feel?"

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *Is the person who feels hate, a terrible person?*
2. *Can people stop themselves from doing hateful actions when they are having hateful feelings?*

"Once When I Was Feeling Loved"

(It is recommended that this session be led by an adult, rather than a child leader.)

By now the children will have discussed a great many human emotions and have had an opportunity to deepen their awareness that all of the emotions are a natural part of the human condition. Today they will turn their attention to the strongest positive emotion of all, love. This topic and the next one, "A Time When I Felt Loving", have been saved for the last so that this unit will end on the most intense positive note possible. Begin the session by emphasizing to the children that every person is deserving of love. Then ask them:

"Think about a time when you knew that someone loved you . . . A time when you were particularly aware that they had loving feelings toward you. Tell us about it."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How did you behave in response?"

"How do you feel right now, about knowing that they love you?"

If children mention someone who loved them temporarily and no longer loves them (such as another child who had a "crush" on them) ask them to think of someone else who knows them well and who loves them now. If you can do it sincerely, and if it will be appropriate (only you know the mood of your group) tell the child who cannot think of anyone who loves him/her you love him/her.

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *What are some of the things that you noticed about this session?*

"A Time When I Felt Loving"

Being loved inspires us to love. Discuss with the children how we learn to love because someone loves us first. Other people learn to be loving because we have shown them how. Then ask them:

"Think about someone, or something, such as some animal, that you love very much. Tell us about it."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How do you behave toward the person (or animal) that you love?"

"How do you let them know that you love them?"

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *If you love some person, or some animal, how do you think it will affect him/her?*

SUPPLEMENTARY ACTIVITIES RELATED TO EXPLORING FEELINGS:

Creative Writing On A Feeling Topic

Ask the children to pick a topic from this unit and write about it being sure to describe their feelings as well as their experience.

Book, Or News Reports That Focus On Feelings

Ask the children to report on books that they have read (whether in written or verbal form) by making statements not only about the content, but also about how they think the various characters in the stories were feeling at different points in the stories. News reports can be made with the same focus.

Art: Representing Feeling In Color, Shape And Line

Ask the children to create two pictures conveying opposite feeling moods. The pictures may be of an abstract nature (colors, lines and design), or concrete (people and/or animals doing things). The pictures may be done in whatever medium the children select. When completed, ask them to make a presentation to the class, or to a small group, letting the other children guess what feelings each picture represents. After the children have guessed, the child may tell the group about his/her pictures and how he/she felt when they were being created.

Music: Becoming Aware Of How Melodies And Lyrics Convey Moods

During music appreciation play a variety of classical, pop and modern recordings and discuss each one with the class with respect to the mood that the composer and musicians wished to convey and how the children felt as they listened.

Creative Dramatics: The Portrayal Of Emotions

Ask a number of children to pair off in twos and create, rehearse and present short dramas to the class that will convey a specific feeling. Be sure each pair of children selects a different emotion so that there will be no duplications. By way of offering guidelines, ask the children to enact some kind of scene, or transaction, in which a certain emotion is dramatically shown, although more than one may be observed.

Following each drama ask the class:

"What did you see happening?"

"Have you ever felt like that?"

Then encourage the actors to tell about how they conceptualized the portrayal of the principle emotion that they wished to demonstrate.

Observing Emotions In Other People

After viewing a film, discuss its content and also ask the class how they think the people in the film were feeling at different points. Discuss the cause and effect relationships between the feelings and the behaviors of each person in the film and how the different people's feelings and behaviors affected each other.

UNIT IX

MASTERY: DISAPPOINTMENTS, PROBLEMS AND DECISION-MAKING

Everyone faces annoyances, disappointments, problems and the need to make decisions. Many of these kinds of problems that people have are common ones, yet each of us has our own unique collection and sequence. Throughout this unit, the children will be dealing with the notion that there is nothing strange, or bad, or wrong with them if at times they have to face difficult challenges. Besides learning that they are not the only ones who have to deal with problems, the children will also have a chance to explore the feelings that they have about them and to gain practical information about problem-solving processes. They will have the opportunity to find out that it isn't so much the problem itself that matters, but how one views and deals with (masters) a problem, that really counts.

At the outset, the children will be given the opportunity to discuss things that bother them. They will continue to find that in the context of the circle it is okay for them to express opinions and feelings that are negative. They will then deal with the issue of being disappointed and their power to disappoint others, including themselves. They will discuss what goes into solving problems responsibly, first through a total class discussion and then in their circle sessions via personal experiences that relate to problem solving.

Finally, the children will discuss decision-making. They will talk about how hard it is, at times, to make decisions, how they feel when they are allowed to share in decision-making processes and how they feel when they are excluded. They will also discuss the importance of giving careful thought to the decisions they make and remaining committed to them.

The main point in each session is not the disappointments, problems or decisions themselves, but *how* the children arrive at their solutions and decisions.

TOPICS ON DISAPPOINTMENTS, PROBLEMS AND DECISION-MAKING

"Something That Bugs Me"

"A Time When I Was Disappointed"

"I Disappointed Someone"

"I Disappointed Myself"

"A Time When One Person Kept Blaming Someone Else For Causing A Problem"

"I Faced A Problem On My Own"

"How I Would Solve Somebody Else's Problem"

"When Somebody Else Tried To Solve My Problem"

"A Problem That I Can't Solve"

"I Tried To Solve A Problem Too Soon"

"I Made A Decision That Was Easy To Make"

"When I Did Not Get To Share In Making The Decision"

"When I Got To Share In Making The Decision"

"I Didn't Want To Have To Make A Decision"

"I Thought It Over And Then Decided"

"I Stuck By A Difficult Decision That I Made"

"Something That Bugs Me"

Today the children will have an opportunity to get some of their vexations and frustrations "off their chests". By initially discussing things that "bug" them, the children will begin this unit with the understanding that everyone becomes bothered at one time or another by something.

This is a particularly valuable session, especially for those children who very infrequently express dissatisfaction, for whatever reason. These children will learn that it is okay to express a negative feeling and opinion in certain contexts and the other children may come to see these children more realistically.

At the outset, briefly discuss how everybody deals with things that bother them and how the people who generally seem to get along well have found reasonable ways to handle their annoyances. Begin the participation phase by telling the children:

"Today we are going to have a chance to talk about things that bother us. Think about something that "bugs" you and tell the group about it. (Be sure not to tell the name of the person, if it is a person, that "bugs" you.)"

As the children participate, ask them:

"What would you like to do about the situation if you could do anything that you wanted?"

"What might be a more realistic thing to do about the situation than doing anything that you would want to do?"

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *What were the similarities that you noticed among this group with respect to the kinds of things that "bug" us?*
2. *What differences did you notice?*

"A Time When I Was Disappointed"

This is a topic that was suggested by a child. Being disappointed is something that children have to deal with often, since they are not in a position to acquire, and/or do, everything that they would like. Begin the session by asking them:

"Think about a time when you were disappointed about something. Possibly you wanted to get something and you didn't get it, or you wanted to go somewhere and you didn't get to go. Tell us about what happened."

At the outset, remind them not to mention names. As they participate, ask them:

"How did you react when you were disappointed?"

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *When you were feeling disappointed, did you feel like no one else could have ever suffered as much as you were suffering?*

"I Disappointed Someone"

(This topic is particularly suitable for dyads.)

Yesterday the children discussed how they have felt disappointment that someone else caused. Today they are possibly more ready to "own" how they disappointed someone else. Begin the session by asking the children:

"Tell us about a time when you were in a position to do something for someone, or give them something, but you didn't do it. Tell us about how you disappointed them."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How did you know that the person was disappointed?"

"How did it make you feel to know that you had disappointed them?"

"How do you feel about it now?"

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *Do you have the power to disappoint people?*

"I Disappointed Myself"

(This topic is particularly suitable for dyads.)

The most serious kind of disappointment is when we have disappointed ourselves. Awareness on the part of the children with respect to this kind of insight may be extremely varied. Some may not think of a single time when they felt disappointed in themselves, and others may be painfully sensitive to their own limitations. In either case, treat the topic as matter-of-factly as all the others. Begin the session by asking the children:

"Think about a time when you expected something of yourself, but you did not meet your own expectations. Tell us about what happened."

As the children participate, ask them:

"Besides being disappointed, what other kinds of feelings did you get?"

Instead of reviewing what each person said today, ask the children:

"Will each person briefly tell about something that he/she accomplished recently that you feel good about?"

After those children who wish to tell about something that they accomplished and felt good about have had a chance to do so, ask the children:

1. *Does it do any good to remember how we disappointed ourselves?*
2. *Does it do any good to keep on being mad at ourselves when we disappoint ourselves?*

STEPS FOR SOLVING A PROBLEM RESPONSIBLY

BEFORE THE REST OF THE TOPICS IN THIS UNIT ARE DISCUSSED IN CIRCLE SESSIONS, PRESENT¹ AND CLARIFY THE FOLLOWING STEPS FOR SOLVING A PROBLEM TO THE CLASS:

1. First of all, it will help me to understand that blaming someone for the problem will not solve it. If I really want to solve the problem I will need to put my energy into working out a solution, not into blaming myself or someone else.

2. Next, it will probably help me to ask myself two questions and then to answer them:

"What exactly is the problem?"

"Whose problem is it?"

If it's not my problem, perhaps the best thing to do would be to let the person (or people) whose problem it is solve it themselves or ask them,

"How can I help you?"

3. If it's my problem and I know what it is, I might decide to ask someone for their help. Maybe I'll need to talk it over with someone who will listen to me.

4. Now, to solve the problem—I'm going to need to ask myself:

"What are some things I could do about this?"

I will need to think of as many reasonable ideas for solving the problem as I can.

5. Next, I'll need to ask myself, for each idea that I came up with:

"What will happen to me and to the other people who will be affected if I try that one?"

This is real important. I'll need to be very honest with myself. If I don't know how someone else will be affected, I'd better ask, "How will you feel about it if I . . ."

6. Finally, I will need to make a decision. If it is a responsible one it will be the solution that will not harm anyone — me or anybody else, unless it can't be helped for some reason. (Sometimes the best decision is to endure a little pain now instead of a whole lot later on, like deciding to have a cavity in a tooth filled now, instead of pulling the tooth later, for example.)

7. If I follow through in a responsible way, I will make the decision and stick to it. If the decision doesn't work or causes more problems, I'll start all over again to solve those. Another thing — I'll try not to blame anybody else for those problems.

¹ If possible make copies of this list for the class. Give them their copies and then read and clarify the list together. See next page for discussion questions to ask the children.

FOLLOWING THE PRESENTATION, ASK THE CHILDREN:

1. *Why is it a good idea to realize that blaming someone for the problem will not help to solve it?*
2. *Why is it so important to know exactly what the problem is?*
3. *Why does it help to know whether or not it's your problem?*
4. *How does it help a person to talk over the problem with someone who will listen?*
5. *Why is it so important to think of as many solutions for the problem as possible?*
6. *After thinking of several possible solutions, what should you do before deciding on one of them?*
7. *Why is it so important to try to figure out what will happen as a result if each solution is tried?*
8. *What makes a decision responsible?*
9. *Why stick to a decision?*
10. *What can you do if the solution doesn't work or more problems come up?*

"A Time When One Person Kept Blaming Someone Else For Causing A Problem"

This topic is very open-ended, allowing the children to tell about a time when they were involved in a situation in which the blame for a problem was being placed on some person. They may have been one of the parties in the discourse, or just an observer. By discussing the energy and dynamics involved in placing the blame, the children will have a first hand opportunity to draw the conclusion that blaming does not generally solve a problem and may in many cases make matters worse. Begin the session by telling the children what the topic is and by asking them:

"Think of a time when you were involved in a situation in which one person kept blaming another for having caused some problem. You may have been the one who was doing the blaming or maybe you were the one being blamed. Or you may have been there watching a situation that involved other people. Without naming names, tell us about what happened."

As the children respond, ask them:

"How did you feel?"

"How did the other person (or people) seem to be feeling?"

"What good did the blaming do?"

"What harm did the blaming do?"

Discuss how solutions do not generally come about by determining whether or not someone is guilty or by "balling them out".

Carefully review how the children felt in the situations that they told about. Culminate by asking them:

1. *What conclusions have you come to about blaming?*

"I Faced A Problem On My Own"

Today the children will talk about a time when they had a problem and they faced it. This is an important issue in the lives of children. Very often, when people refuse to acknowledge their problems, they suffer a great deal because later on their problems just get worse. Briefly discuss this idea with the children and then ask them:

"Think about a time when you had a problem and instead of pretending that it wasn't there, or blaming someone for it, you faced it and did something about it. Tell us what happened."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How did the problem make you feel?"

"How do you feel right now, knowing that you faced your problem and did something about it?"

Following a review, culminate by asking the children:

1. *What can sometimes happen when someone who has a problem doesn't face it?*
2. *Is it easy to face problems?*
3. *Is it okay to ask for help when you have a problem?*

"How I Would Solve Somebody Else's Problem"

It is always easy for people to figure out solutions to the problems that others have. Today the children will talk about how they were able to see solutions for other people's problems. They will also discuss why it is so easy for us to be able to solve somebody else's problem, and so hard for us to solve our own. Begin the participation phase by asking them:

"Have you ever known somebody who had a problem when the solution seemed simple to you, and you felt like you knew exactly what they needed to do about their problem? Tell the group about it."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How did the person seem to be feeling about his/her problem?"

"What kind of feelings did you have about the problem?"

"If you told the person what you thought they ought to do, how did they react?"

Expect a wide variety of responses. Some children may report that their solutions were hardly even listened to by the person with the problem. And some may report the opposite reaction. The solution may have been most helpful. In these latter cases, ask the children:

"How did it make you feel about yourself when (your friend accepted the money you loaned to her)?"

Discuss how many times we don't really know the solution for someone else's problem, but when we try to help them we are showing them that we care.

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *Why do you think it's so easy for someone who doesn't have the problem to know what a solution might be?*
2. *Why is it sometimes very hard for a person who has a problem to figure out what to do about it?*

1 See Appendix B for a transcript of a minimally edited tape recording of an actual circle session with fifth and sixth graders and their teacher as they discuss this topic.

"When Somebody Else Tried To Solve My Problem"

Today the children will talk about how it feels when they are the one who has the problem and somebody else seems to know what the solution should be. Begin the participation phase by asking them:

"Think about a time when you had a problem and somebody else felt that they knew what you should do about it. Tell us about what happened."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How were you feeling about your problem?"

"Did the other person seem to feel the same way that you did about the problem?"

"Did they help you?"

"How did you feel about someone else telling you what they thought you should do?"

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *Why do you think it was so easy for the other people that we told about to know how to solve the problems that we had?*
2. *Why was it hard for us to know what to do?*

"A Problem That I Can't Solve"

(This topic should be led by an adult, rather than a child-leader.)

Today the children will discuss some of the current frustrations that they may be having with respect to problems that they are dealing with at present.

Begin the session by discussing how all of us have unsolved problems and remind the children that it is not relevant in the session to tell who the people are that may be involved in their problems. Begin the participation phase by asking them:

*"Think about a problem that you have right now that for some reason or other, you can't solve. It might be because you do not have the knowledge or ability to solve the problem, or it might be something that isn't even **your** problem. Tell us about what it is."*

As the children participate, ask them:

"How do you feel about the problem?"

In the case of children who may be frustrated because a problem exists in their lives and as you perceive it, they truly did not cause it, nor do they have the power to do anything about it, ask:

*"Is this really **your** problem?"*

In these cases help the child to realize that he/she does not have any responsibility in having caused, or for solving the problem. Help the child to see that there are ways that he/she can look at the situation without being too hard on him/herself.

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *If someone has a problem that they can't solve, are they a bad person?*
2. *Do you think that all problems are solved with a simple solution?*
3. *Do some problems ever become easier to solve if you "let them be" for awhile?*

"I Tried To Solve A Problem Too Soon"

Problem-solving is a complex matter. Sometimes the problems that we have become more severe when we don't face them and sometimes we run into trouble with problems when we are too anxious to resolve them. In the latter case, there are some kinds of problems that cannot be solved until "all the facts are in" and/or a number of alternatives or options have been considered. Briefly discuss these ideas with the children. Then begin the participation phase by asking them:

"Have you ever had a problem that you were very anxious to solve? You did what you decided to do, but later you realized that you had been in too much of a hurry to solve the problem? It could be that you didn't think of enough possible solutions first, or you forgot to think about what would happen if you tried the solutions. Tell us about what happened."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How were you feeling about the problem?"

"Looking back on what happened, how would you have solved the problem differently if you could do it over again?"

Following a review, culminate by asking the children:

1. *How long should people wait before they decide on a solution for their problems?*
2. *Does it do us any good to remember mistakes we made?*
3. *Does it do us any good to remain annoyed with ourselves when we make a mistake?*

"I Made A Decision That Was Easy To Make"

Today the children will enter the topic realm of decision-making, and will begin by telling about a decision that they made that caused them little difficulty. Begin the session by asking them:

"Think about a time when you had to make some kind of a decision, that was easy to make, and tell us about it."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How did you feel about making the decision?"

"As you look back on it, how do you feel about the decision now?"

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *Are all decisions that we make easy?*
2. *Are all decisions that we make difficult?*

"When I Did Not Get To Share In Making The Decision"

This session provides the children with an opportunity to articulate their feelings and the reasons for how they feel when they are not permitted to share in the decision-making process. One of the major benefits of today's activity is that by increasing the children's communicative skills, their ability to constructively negotiate at a verbal level is strengthened. As the children's communicative skills increase, they can enter into more meaningful discussions about the decision-making process. They will be much less prone to resort to destructive behavior as a way of expressing their feelings when they are not included in decision-making. Begin the session by discussing this idea with the children. Then ask them:

"Think of a time when a decision needed to be made that would affect you, but you were not asked for your opinion. Instead, other people (it isn't important who) made the decision and you did not get to share in the process. Tell us about it."

As the children participate, be sure not to become involved in discussions regarding the possible validity or non-validity of decisions that were made, rather focus on how the children felt, by asking them:

"How did you feel about being left out of the decision-making process?"

Following a review, culminate by asking:

1. *Is it useful to be able to talk about how it feels to be left out of the decision-making process?*
2. *With your ability to explain your opinions and feelings, what could you do the next time you feel that you might get left out of making a decision that will affect you?*

"When I Got To Share In Making The Decision"

One of the key ingredients in social relationships is the degree to which people share in making decisions. When people share equally in the decision-making process they feel important and respected. But, when people have decisions made for them, they feel that they are not seen as being important.

The purpose of this activity is to bring sharply into each child's awareness an understanding of this wish to share in decision-making and to continue to promote the language necessary to articulately express feelings about this focal issue in social relationships. Begin this session by discussing these ideas. Then ask the children:

"Think about a time when a decision was going to be made that would affect you and you were asked to tell what you thought would be the best decision. You were consulted, and what you said was taken into consideration. Tell us how it happened."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How did you feel when you got to share in making the decision?"

Following a review, culminate by asking the children:

1. *If you are in charge of some situation that involves other people and a decision needs to be made that will affect them, what would be a fair thing for you to do?*

"I Didn't Want To Have To Make A Decision"

This topic is a very important one. Similar to not wanting to face problems, people often don't want to be committed to decisions. It is an issue that everyone has to deal with at one time or another. The child who understands that sometimes he/she must make decisions is far ahead of many people who do not seriously grapple with this reality until later on in life. Begin the session by telling the children what the topic is and by asking them:

"Think about a time when you felt like you were put on the spot in some kind of a situation. Possibly your friends wanted you to do something but you didn't want to do it, so you felt trapped. Or, possibly you were having a hard time choosing between two things. Tell us about how you didn't want to have to make a decision."

As the children participate, ask them:

"What was the feeling you had, when you realized that you needed to make a decision?"

"How do you feel about it right now?"

Very often individuals will say that they had no feelings. This is consistent with the fact that they were probably making themselves as unaware as possible of the situation, so that they would not have to experience any kind of suffering. Discuss with the children how people tend to do this sometimes, yet have to face making decisions that are hard to make at one time or another.

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *What usually happens when we just don't make any kind of decision at all?*
2. *Is it possible to rush too quickly into a decision before waiting to make sure of what's really going on?*

"I Thought It Over And Then Decided"

This is a very important activity because it reinforces the concept that consideration should precede decisions if they are going to be effective and responsible ones. The children receive dual benefits in this session by first focusing on this value, and secondly, by telling about a time when they effectively and responsibly thought something over before making a decision.

Tell the children that we are concerned today with how our ability to think things over helps us. Discuss the topic briefly and then ask them:

"Think of a time when you made a decision that you thought over carefully first. Tell us about what went into making your decision."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How did you feel before making the decision?"

"How did you feel afterward?"

Discuss how often there are complexities to be looked at and compromises to made. Mixed feelings are often the result.

Following a brief review, culminate by asking the children:

1. *Someone once said, "When you keep from making a decision — that's a decision." What do you think this means?*

■ (This last question need not be answered now. Write it on the board and ask the children to think about it. Conduct the session with the topic, "I Stuck By A Difficult Decision That I Made," tomorrow.)

"I Stuck By A Difficult Decision That I Made"

Begin today's session with a brief discussion of the final question from the activity which preceded this one, *"Someone once said, 'When you keep from making a decision — that's a decision.' What do you think this means?"* Focus on how difficult decisions can sometimes be, but how frequently things sooner or later get worse if a decision is put off. To carry this idea further, ask the group:

"Have you ever made a difficult decision and then stuck to it?"

"How do you feel about it now?"

Throughout the session, focus on how our minds can serve us well and how good it is to know that we have the ability to use our will power and be in charge of our behavior.

After reviewing, ask the children:

1. *What can happen when people pretend that there isn't a problem and keep from making a decision?*
2. *What can happen when they don't stick by important decisions that they do make?*

SUPPLEMENTARY ACTIVITIES RELATED TO DISAPPOINTMENTS, PROBLEMS AND DECISION MAKING:

Creative Dramatics And Class Discussions On Problem Solving

Select one child for each of the following dramatic problem situations and have him/her select one to four other children in the class to help enact two short extemporaneous dramas for the class. The number of children selected will depend on how many people are required to enact each drama. The child in charge should play the role of the key character. The first dramatic presentation of each problem situation should demonstrate how *not* to solve the problem and the second one should demonstrate a responsible and effective way to solve it, using STEPS FOR SOLVING A PROBLEM RESPONSIBLY (page 158) as a guide. After having a period of time to prepare their dramas, ask each group to perform them in front of the class. (Expect the hilarity that will occur as a result of watching the first drama for each problem situation.) The child in charge of each drama may inform the audience of the problem, describe the setting and tell about the role of each actor prior to the presentation.

The problem situations:

The two children who live next door are having a disagreement. What should you do? (Three characters.)

You go shopping in a big store with your little sister. Suddenly you realize that she is nowhere to be found. What should you do? (Two characters, possibly more — clerks, shoppers, etc.)

You are playing catch with your friend and he/she throws the ball, which belongs to you, too hard. It lands on a roof and doesn't come down. What should you do? (Two characters, possibly more.)

You have broken something at a relative's home. Should you tell them or not? (At least two characters.)

You have broken your arm. You know that when the doctor sets it, it's going to hurt. What should you do? (Two characters, possibly more — witnesses, nurses, etc.)

There is going to be a test tomorrow and you haven't studied. You know that you aren't ready for the test, but you want to spend the afternoon and evening at your friend's house. What should you do? (Two characters, possibly more.)

Following each presentation demonstrating *ineffective* modes of problem solving, ask the class:

"What did you see happening?"

"How do you think the person with the problem felt?"

"How did the other people seem to feel?"

"Why do you think this method for solving the problem is ineffective?"

Following each presentation demonstrating *effective* modes of problem solving, ask the class:

"What did you see happening this time?"

"How did the people in the drama seem to be feeling?"

"What did you like about this solution?"

"What are some other solutions that could have been tried?"

"Is the same solution the right one for everybody?"

Then ask the actors:

"How did you decide how to show the problem and how to show the ineffective and effective solutions?"

After the class has seen and discussed all of the dramas, ask them to suggest other hypothetical situations and to come up with alternative solutions for them.

A Story: Perceiving Problems And Making Decisions

Read each of the following four parts of this story to your class, and conduct a class discussion on the problems that are presented in each part before going on to the next one using **STEPS FOR SOLVING PROBLEMS RESPONSIBLY** (page 158) as a guide. It is important that the children understand that the conditions in the story cannot be changed. Feel free to spend as much time as the class needs to fully discuss each of the four parts of the story. (The story also presents another opportunity for role playing.)

"The Quarry Adventure"

1. A good friend of yours tells you at school on Friday that the next day he is going to sneak off and go swimming in the rock quarry a mile south of your town. He invites you to go along. You would like very much to go with him, but you know that it is a very dangerous place to swim. Several children were drowned in the quarry a few summers ago, after which town officials urged parents to forbid their children to swim there. Your parents and the parents of your best friend have often forbidden you to go there. Would you go with your friend or not? Would you tell his parents of his intention in order to protect his life?
2. The next day, Saturday, shortly after noon, you meet your friend on his way to the rock quarry to swim. Now you know he wasn't kidding the day before. He is really going to the quarry alone to swim, and his life may be in danger. You pass by his house on the way to your own home. Would you stop to tell his parents?
3. Around seven o'clock Saturday evening your friend's mother calls your home to inquire if you know where he is. He had left his home immediately after lunch telling his parents that he was going to the school playground for a baseball game. When he didn't return home for dinner, his father drove to the playground, but found no one there. You know that your friend went to the quarry, but you don't know whether he's just enjoying himself and has perhaps lost track of the time, or whether something has happened to him. Would you tell his mother that you knew he had gone to the quarry early in the afternoon?
4. Assume you told your friend's parents that he had gone to the quarry. They go to find him and discover him there. He had lost track of the time, but nothing had happened to him. They withdraw all his privileges for a full month. At school the next week, he passes you in the hall, but refuses to speak to you. Some of your mutual friends also seem less than friendly toward you. What would you do?

Art: Creating Imaginative Solutions

Give each child in the classroom a piece of blank paper. With their crayolas, ask them to pick a color and make a nondescript wavy or jagged line (a squiggle) somewhere on the paper. Then ask the children to give their papers to someone seated near them. Each child will then be faced with a problem situation, a challenge, requiring them to use the squiggle as a basis, or foundation, for the creation of a picture. Urge them to be as imaginative as they feel and to add onto the squiggle whatever comes to their minds.

Creative Writing: Stories For Smaller Children

Ask the children in your class to write a short story in manuscript printing for younger children in a primary class, entitled, "The Big Blaming Blunder of Blithering Corners" or "How Dennis the Daddy-Long-Legs Made His Decision." Urge them to be as imaginative as possible in creating their stories. (They may, of course, change the titles — names of characters, or make any other changes they wish.)

They may also illustrate their stories. When the stories are completed, guide the class through the process of deciding which primary class to give the stories to. Then bind the stories into a book and allow some of the children in your class to present the book to the primary class.

UNIT X

SOCIAL INTERACTION: CONFLICT RESOLUTION

There are many different kinds of conflicts occurring in numerous ways for a multitude of reasons. There are infinite twists on the theme of oppressors and perpetrators engaged in "hot and cold wars" with those who are on the defensive. (Most of us seem to perceive ourselves as being in the latter category most of the time.) Despite the great number of variations on the theme, a common element can be found in a lack of consideration of human emotion. In other words, sometimes each of us is truly attacked or threatened in some way and sometimes we are the aware or unaware initiators of the conflict, but what generally lays at "the bottom of it" is that someone, somewhere, is not getting his/her needs met. Someone's feelings are not being heard.

For as many conflicts that there are, there are probably just as many possible ways to respond to upsetting or threatening situations. Among the infinite ways in which human beings have responded to real or imagined attack are: retaliating with physical violence, insulting the "enemy", retreating, ignoring the affront, attempting to relate grievances to each other, compromise, and summit conferences that may or may not involve open communication. Despite the wide variety of responses that can be attempted, all too often the response that is glorified the most is some kind of primitive counter-attack.

Unfortunately, prosocial modes of resolving conflicts that involve equitable two-way communication and understanding are practically never given the attention in our society that is given to aggression. Movies, television programs, popular books and magazines and newspaper headlines either deliberately or inadvertently laud aggression, *especially physical violence* everyday by giving it top priority attention. To the media, man's inhumanity to man makes exciting news; and authors, editors and program directors "capitalize" on it as often as possible. The public is virtually bombarded with the modeling of uncivilized, insensitive behaviors and the ones who play these roles are all too often the heroes!

Despite these circumstances the majority of human beings resolve their everyday conflicts *without* resorting to physical or even verbal violence. Prosocial means of resolving conflicts are generally practiced by most of us, most of the time! But our methods and styles for doing so are rarely brought into focus or given any attention at all. In "real life" we are often willing to communicate respectfully and compassionately again and again, which is particularly significant when one considers the emphasis our society places on aggression. When seen in this light prosocial modes of conflict resolution are even more exciting than aggression because they demonstrate our human capacity to behave at a level beyond our "animal instincts" in spite of the media.

It is the intent of this unit on conflict resolution to familiarize children with the behaviors that cause and escalate conflicts and even more importantly, to focus on the elements of prosocial behavior. It is our objective to help them to understand how conflicts may be avoided and resolved through reason, communication and understanding and to feel a sense of pride in themselves when they behave this way.

The unit begins with a preliminary activity that brings the dynamics of three kinds of conflicts and their results to the children's awareness. They will learn about the various behaviors of the people involved that lead to resolution or to no resolution of the conflict and to feelings of respect or disrespect in the people.

The first topic to be introduced, in which the children will tell about a conflict they witnessed, will permit them to rather objectively identify further the dynamics and results of different kinds of conflicts. Although these activities are guided toward the objective of placing value on non-hurtful resolution of conflict, the children are given the opportunity to arrive at these values on their own.

Although a great variety of factors are involved in conflicts, this unit will focus on three major situational categories. After the children discuss the conflict they witnessed, they will relate to their own experiences. They will discuss situations in which they were unfairly treated first, such as, "The Day Someone Took Something Away From Me", thus allowing them to become fully aware of how one feels when they are victimized. The focus changes several sessions later however, to times when the children themselves may have initiated the conflict. An example of one

of these topics is: "I Didn't Realize That I Had Started The Fight". Since they have discussed how they felt as victim, they are now in a more open position to recognize how others feel when they have been hurt and to empathize with them. Finally, a third category is introduced. These sessions relate to times when the children behaved in prosocial ways, such as, "I Wanted To Take More Than My Share, But I Didn't". The last topic, "A Good Idea I Got From Someone In The Group For Handling A Conflict", allows the children to tell each other how they have assimilated concrete ideas from one another for the resolution of future conflict situations.

ALL OF THE TOPICS IN THIS UNIT SHOULD BE LED BY AN ADULT, RATHER THAN A CHILD LEADER.

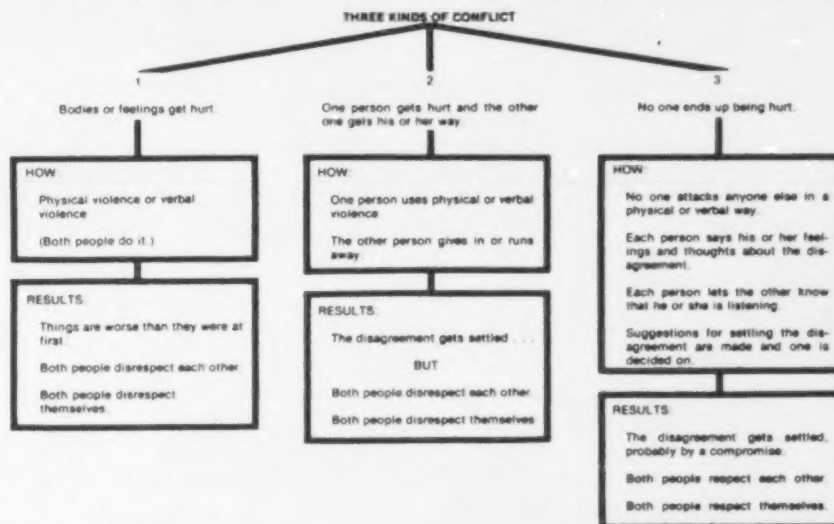
A PRELIMINARY ACTIVITY RELATED TO CONFLICT RESOLUTION:

A Chart, Stories And Discussion About Conflicts

Begin this activity by clarifying as a class the meaning of the following words:

conflict	respect
physical violence	disrespect
verbal violence	compromise

Then present the following chart to the class: (You may duplicate copies for them — See Appendix F — or you may copy it on a large chart which may subsequently be posted on a bulletin board.)



Tell the children that the chart shows three main kinds of conflicts — how they *usually* occur and what the results *usually* are.¹ Then read over the chart together, allowing the children to comment on it as they become acquainted with it. Make your own comments too. When the children have thoroughly reviewed the chart, tell them that you are going to read six brief stories

¹ The purpose of this chart is to acquaint children with the *general* elements of three major kinds of conflict, but it does not encompass every kind of conflict. Further, the description of each conflict is simplistically presented. Research on conflict resolution indicates that in most cases these kinds of conflicts occur in these ways, with these results (as shown). However, as this guide has consistently pointed out, each life situation is unique.

about some conflicts to them. Urge them to use the information on the chart to help them to decide which kind of conflict each story is about. The stories and discussion questions follow:

A sixth grade class is beginning an art project when Tom notices that Jeanette, who sits next to him, has his paint set. "Hey, gimme that!" says Tom.

"What?" Jeanette answers, looking surprised and uncertain about what Tom means.

"Gimme my paint set. You've got my paint set," repeats Tom.

"This is my paint set," retorts Jeanette.

"Oh, no it's not," Tom yells. "See. Look here. It has my name on the side." Tom turns the paint set around and angrily points to his name.

"Oh. It is yours," says Jeanette quietly. "I guess I took it by mistake . . . Here . . ." She hands the paint set over to Tom, but then very clearly she says, "I sure do feel bad when somebody yells at me the way you just did. I wish you wouldn't do that."

"Did I yell?" says Tom softly.

"Yes," answers Jeanette.

"It made you feel bad?"

"Yes. And you felt bad when you couldn't find your paint set and found out that I had it. Right?"

"Right," Tom agrees. He begins to smile. Jeanette smiles back and then she starts to look in her desk for her paint set, but she can't find it. She turns to Tom and says, "Guess what? My paint set is missing."

"Well, why don't we both use mine," suggests Tom. "Here, I'll put it in the middle so we can both reach it easily. Lucky I have two brushes. Only one's pretty bad."

"I'll use the bad one for awhile and then could we trade?" Jeanette asks.

"Sure," responds Tom.

Things didn't work out perfectly for either Tom or Jeanette. They had to share one paint set. (It's better if you have your own.) And for awhile both had to use a bad brush. But Tom and Jeanette had a good time painting. They laughed and talked to each other and their other friends a lot that afternoon while they painted.

What kind of a conflict was this one? Was it like two or three? (3)

How did you know?

Did Tom and Jeanette listen to each others feelings? How?

How did Tom and Jeanette work it out when Jeanette couldn't find her paints?

Why do you think Tom was willing to share his paints with Jeanette?

How did Tom and Jeanette seem to feel about each other and about themselves at the end of this story?

In another sixth grade classroom the same thing happens. Marci can't find her paint set and notices that Yvette, who sits next to her has it and is already starting to use it. "Hey. What do you think you're doing?" Marci yells. "That's my paint set you've got there."

Yvette looks up, surprised. "You're nuts," she retorts.

Angrier than before, Marci starts to grab for the paints, but Yvette slaps her hand. That makes Marci furious. She shoves Yvette back against her chair. The chair falls over and so does Yvette.

At this point the teacher steps in and sends both Marci and Yvette to the office, while the rest of the class enjoys the painting project. Marci and Yvette do not speak to each other at the office. They only give each other mean looks all afternoon.

What kind of a conflict was this one? (1)

How did you know?

What kind of violence takes place in this story? (physical)

Was there a settlement between the two girls?

How do you think they felt about each other? . . . about themselves?

In still another sixth grade class the very same problem arises. Chad and Lowell sit next to each other and this time it is Chad who's got Lowell's paints. Lowell has been looking all over for his paints, but he can't find them. Then he notices that they are on Chad's desk and Chad is starting to use them. "Hey you've got my paint set, Chad," says Lowell.

"These are my paints, not yours," says Chad.

"Oh no they aren't," insists Lowell. "They're mine!" But Chad just keeps on painting.

"Give them here," Lowell insists again, but Chad does not respond.

By now Lowell is upset. "Look, Chad, I know that those are my paints," he says. "Turn it over and you'll see my name on it."

But Chad just keeps on painting.

Lowell tries one more thing. "Listen Chad, look in your desk and you'll find your own paints in there — or let me look for you."

Chad stops painting and gives Lowell a mean look. Then he says, "You shut up and leave me alone and don't you dare put your hands in my desk."

At this point, Lowell breaths a deep sigh. Unhappily he takes a pencil out of his desk and begins to sketch on his piece of paper with the pencil. He knows that he can't get another paint set because there aren't any extras. He wanted to paint, but instead he just continues to sketch with the pencil while everyone else paints.

Now and then Chad and Lowell look at each other. Their faces are not friendly.

What kind of a conflict was this one? (2)

How did you know?

What kind of violence does Chad use on Lowell? (verbal)

What else could Lowell have tried?

How do you think they feel about each other? . . . about themselves?

This story is about an accident. In another sixth grade classroom Charles, while moving his chair, bangs it into Derrick's hand. "Ouch," yells Derrick. "Watch what you're doing."

"Oh, that didn't hurt, you phony," responds Charles. "Just calm down, you big baby."

"It did so. It hurt a lot. You're just a clumsy goon," Derrick yells back, even louder.

"You don't know what you're talking about, idiot," Charles yells back. "Just keep it quiet and leave me alone."

"I'll get you for that, Charles," Derrick threatens, waving his fist.

"Just try it," says Charles, looking menacingly back at Derrick.

Just then some of the other children in the class begin to speak up. They tell Charles and Derrick to quiet down. After that, the two boys never have much to say to each other like they used to.

What kind of a conflict was this one? (1)
 How did you know?
 What kind of violence did Charles and Derrick both use? (verbal)
 How did Charles react to Derrick's feelings?
 Did anything get settled?
 How do you feel about the way they treated each other?

In another sixth grade class, Maria accidentally runs into Peter, who tells her, "Watch where you're going."

Maria is embarrassed. She looks at Peter and then says, "I'm sorry. I didn't know you were there."

"Well, I am here and you'd better be more careful," Peter says loudly to her.

That makes Maria feel bad. She said she was sorry and it was an accident.

"What more can I do?" she thought.

Instead of saying anything more she hurries away.

"Well, I guess she'll know better than to try to push me around anymore," says Peter, laughing loudly to the other children who have been watching.

After that Maria and Peter never talk to each other again.

What kind of a conflict was this one? (2)
 How did you know?
 What kind of violence does Peter use? (verbal)
 What else could Maria have tried?
 How do you feel about Peter's behavior?
 Do you think Peter really respected himself for doing this?

The last story is about still another accident that takes place in yet another sixth grade classroom. Penny, who is taking off her coat, turns to see who is coming in the door, when the sleeve of the coat goes right into Su Lee's eye.

"Hey Penny, be careful," says Su Lee loudly. "You hurt my eye."

"How could I have hurt your eye?" Penny responds coldly.

"Your coat. You swung your coat into my eye," says Su Lee, her eye filled with tears. "It really hurts. Take a look."

Penny doesn't think that her coat could have hurt Su Lee's eye. She doubtfully turns and looks at it. When Penny sees that Su Lee's eye has obviously been hurt, she asks, "My coat did this to you?"

"Yeah . . . When you were taking it off. It swung right into my eye."

"Oh. Gee, I'm sorry, Su Lee," Penny responds. "I can tell that your eye really got hurt. Gee. I didn't even know that I had done that."

"Oh. It'll be all right. It was just an accident . . . You didn't do it on purpose," says Su Lee, feeling good that Penny cares about her. "It was such a wierd accident that I can see why you didn't believe me at first."

Both girls laugh good naturedly.

What kind of a conflict was this one? (3)

How did you know?

Did Penny want to listen to Su Lee's feelings at first?

How did Su Lee get Penny to pay attention to her feelings?

How did Penny let Su Lee know that she cared about her?

How do you think Penny and Su Lee felt about each other at the end of the story? . . .

How do you think they felt about themselves?

Some general discussion questions:

1. What are two ways in which someone can get hurt in a conflict?
(By physical or verbal violence.)
2. In the third kind of conflict, what do the people *keep from* doing to each other?
(verbal or physical attack)
3. How does telling each other their feelings and thoughts help?
4. How does it help to show someone that you are listening to their feelings and thoughts?
5. Which way of handling a conflict probably takes the most time and maybe even the most energy? (3)
6. Is it worth it? Why or why not?

Another valuable preliminary activity for this unit is the communication exercise on "I-You Messages". See page 84.

TOPICS ON CONFLICT RESOLUTION:

"I Observed A Conflict"

"The Day Someone Took Something Away From Me"

"If I Had Been Bigger There Wouldn't Have Been Any Trouble"

"I Got Blamed For Something That I Didn't Do"

"I Got Involved In A Conflict Because Something Unfair Was Happening To Someone Else"

"I Didn't Realize That I Had Started The Fight"

"I Got Into A Fight Because I Was Already Feeling Bad"

"I Thought I Was Doing The Right Thing, But I Got Into A Conflict Anyway"

"I Was Angry At One Person, But I Took It Out On Someone Else"

"I Wanted To Take More Than My Share, But I Didn't"

"I Felt Like Saying Something, But I Didn't"

"A Time When Somebody Put Me Down And I Handled It Well"

"A Good Idea I Got From Someone In The Group For Handling A Conflict"

"I Observed A Conflict"

The children will begin their circle session discussions about conflict resolution today. In this session they will tell about conflicts that they witnessed. By discussing conflicts that they were not involved in, the children will be given an opportunity in this initial session to improve their understanding of the dynamics in conflicts and their outcomes with some degree of objectivity. In the next sessions they will talk about conflict situations that they experienced personally. Begin the session by asking the children:

"Think about a time when you saw two people (or more) get into a conflict. Perhaps it was an example of the first kind of conflict that we learned about on the chart, or the second or the third. Be very sure not to tell us who was involved in the conflict. Just tell us how it got started and what happened."

After each child describes the conflict he/she witnessed, ask:

"Was there any kind of settlement?"

(If yes) "Did both people agree on it?"

"How did both people seem to feel about each other and about themselves in the end?"

"How did you feel about the conflict then?"

"How do you feel about it now?"

Following a review in which the children focus on the feelings that they have now about the conflicts that they witnessed, culminate the session by asking them:

1. *Did you hear about any behaviors in any of these stories that you thought were helpful — that would help to make the conflict a number three type?*¹
2. *What were they?*

"The Day Someone Took Something Away From Me"

Today the children will begin to discuss topics that involve their own personal experiences. In this session they will tell about a time when someone violated one of their rights and truly victimized them by taking something away from them. They will tell how they felt and how they responded to the situation when it occurred. When children hear each other tell, one after another, about the negative feelings that they experience when something is taken from them, it is doubtful that they will ever be able to take something away from someone else without, at least, knowing the implications of their actions. Begin the session by telling the children what the topic is and by asking them:

"Have you ever had someone take something that was yours away from you? Without telling who did it, tell us about what happened and how you felt."

Focus mainly on the behavior and feelings of the children as they respond by asking them:

"What did you do when it happened?"

"How do you feel about it now?"

¹ See "A Preliminary Activity Related To Conflict Resolution", page 170.

Following a review in which the children focus on the feelings that were described, ask them:

1. *Who should not take things away from other people?*
2. *What are some constructive ways to respond when something has been taken away from you that you heard in this session, or that you can think of?*

"If I Had Been Bigger, There Wouldn't Have Been Any Trouble"

Again today the children will discuss how it feels to be victimized. They will talk about how it feels to be "picked on" by someone who is bigger than they are. Begin the session by telling them what the topic is and then by asking them:

"Think of a time when someone who is older, or bigger, than you 'bullied' or 'picked on' you. Without mentioning the name of the one who did it, tell us about what happened and how it made you feel."

As the children participate, ask them:

"What did you do as it happened?"

"What did you feel like doing?"

Discuss how our feelings are sometimes poor guides to behavior. In a case such as this, for example, if a child were to hit the bigger individual like he/she very likely felt like doing, the retaliation might have been devastating. Hence, for very good reasons, what we do in some situations is not what we feel like doing. *Sometimes, giving in or running away is the very best thing a person could do in some situations.*

Review by focusing on how each child felt when treated unfairly and culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *Sometimes giving in or running away from someone who behaves like this is the best thing to do, but are there any other things that the one who is being "picked on" could try?*
2. *What are they?*
3. *If you "pick on" someone who is smaller than you, is that fair?*
4. *How will the smaller child feel if you do it?*

"I Got Blamed For Something That I Didn't Do"

Today the children will discuss the frustration that accompanies receiving blame when they are not guilty. By discussing this topic they will once again be focusing on their own feelings when they are unfairly treated and how this does at one time or another seem to happen to everyone. Begin the session by asking the children:

"Has anyone ever put the blame on you for something that you didn't do? Without telling who did it, tell us about what happened and how you felt."

Expect a very lively reaction. As each child participates, ask:

"How did the person who blamed you seem to be feeling?"

"What did you do?"

Discuss how impulsive handling of frustration can lead to more frustration. The person who blames another is usually frustrated him/herself in the first place. This kind of feeling can lead to unreasonable behavior (like off-the-wall blaming of others), which, in turn, causes those who are blamed to feel frustrated and, if they don't stop themselves, to unreasonable behavior of their own.

Following a brief review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *What are some constructive ways to handle a situation like this that you heard in this session, or that you can think of?*
2. *If you feel like blaming someone for something they did that upset you, what should you do first?*

"I Got Involved In A Conflict Because Something Unfair Was Happening To Someone Else"

Today the children will again discuss their involvement in a conflict because of unfair treatment, but in this case they are not the victim, someone else is. This is a complex issue. By discussing it, the children will have an opportunity to realize that sometimes conflicts are unavoidable and our involvement in them is the responsible thing to do. They will also examine the complexities in these situations, i.e., (1) when is becoming involved with someone else's problem "none of our business", and (2) what are the most constructive ways to intervene when we decide to. Begin the session by telling the children what the topic is. Then ask them:

"Think of a time when you saw something happening when one person (or possibly more) was being hurt in some way by another person (or by some group) and you didn't think it was right so you got involved. Without telling us who the people were, tell us about what happened before and after you got involved."

Some children may have never intervened in a situation such as this and may prefer to just listen today. As those who respond do so, ask them:

"How were you feeling?"

"How were the other people feeling?"

"How do you feel now about involving yourself?"

"Was it easy for you to do it?"

"Would you do the same thing again? If not, how would you behave differently?"

Do not evaluate the children's responses. Rather, in a general way, discuss how sometimes it is hard to tell whether or not our interventions are really helpful or just unnecessary interference. Sometimes people do need help of this kind from someone else and to give it very often takes a lot of courage. Discuss also how there are various ways to intervene and each situation requires a careful analysis if the intervention is to be effective.

Review by focusing on how each child felt as he/she intervened and culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *When do you think it is right and necessary to intervene when someone is being treated unfairly, and when isn't it?*
2. *If you get involved in a situation like this, is there just one way to do it?*
3. *What are some ways that will not hurt anyone unnecessarily that you can think of?*

"I Didn't Realize That I Had Started The Fight"

Today the children will begin to explore the possibility that sometimes their own behavior has an influence on the development and outcome of conflicts that they are involved in. By being presented with this topic they are given a "handle" on bringing an important (although probably not very comfortable) awareness to full consciousness. No one generally enjoys remembering times when they behaved less than honorably, but if the memory will serve to influence future behavior in a responsible and considerate direction, it will serve a useful purpose. Begin the session by telling the children what the topic is and then by asking them:

"Think back to a time when you got into some kind of a conflict and when it happened you didn't know that you had started it. But now, as you look back, you realize that there may have been something that you said, or did, that caused the other person (or people) who were involved to become upset. Tell us about what happened and what you did to start the fight."

It is likely that some of the children will remember a time when they were instrumental in bringing about a conflict, but would prefer to just listen today. To those who do respond, ask:

"How were you feeling?"

"How did your behavior cause the other person (or people) to feel?"

Discuss with the children how hard it is for most of us to "see" what we are *doing* when we are upset. Only later are we able to recall the things that we did or said and very often we forget quickly because the memory is unpleasant. So, it takes courage to remember these things and even more courage to talk to others about them.

Following a review in which the children focus on the feelings and behaviors that were described in the session, culminate by asking them:

1. *Does it help to remember the things that we have done, or said, that led to a conflict?*
2. *How?*
3. *Does it help to get mad at ourselves for the things we do that are not perfect?*

"I Got Into A Fight Because I Was Already Feeling Bad"

Today's session is similar to the one which preceded it with even more emphasis on how the way we feel can cause us to behave in certain ways. When we feel good the behaviors that usually result are friendly, cooperative, energetic and so on. But when we feel bad we very often manifest negative behaviors, *unless we become aware of our feelings and our urges and stop ourselves from committing acts that will hurt or disturb someone else*. It is the objective of this activity to help the children understand this. Begin the session by telling them what the topic is and by asking them:

"Think of a time when you got into a conflict and, as you look back on it, you realize that it probably happened because you were already feeling bad. Your feelings may have made you act in certain ways that led to the conflict. Tell us about how it happened."

Again today some of the children may prefer to just listen. Ask the ones who do speak:

"How did the other person (or people) seem to be feeling?"

"Did their feelings seem to influence their behavior?"

Discuss how the chances of a conflict increase when the number of people who are feeling bad increases.

Following a review, culminate by asking the children:

1. *Do you have to act the way you feel?*

"I Thought I Was Doing The Right Thing But I Got Into A Conflict Anyway"

In this session the children will describe how they got into a conflict when they weren't expecting it and how they felt as a result. This, of course, has happened to everyone, sometimes unfairly and sometimes because of lack of awareness on our own part. Our objectives in this session are to bring to the children's attention the universality of this kind of situation and how, very often, it can be avoided if we consider the ways our behaviors will be reacted to by others, before we act. Begin the session by asking them:

"Have you ever gotten into a conflict or some kind of trouble for doing something that you thought at the time was the right thing to do? Tell us about what happened."

As the children respond, do not allow any judgments to be rendered with respect to whether or not they should have gotten into a conflict or into trouble. Instead, focus on the children's feelings and the feelings of the other people involved in their stories by asking them:

"How did you feel when it happened?"

"How did (the other person) seem to be feeling?"

"As you look back on it, how do you feel about it now? Do you see it differently now?"

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *Does this happen to a few people only?*
2. *What could you do if you are about to do something and you don't know if you'll get someone upset or not?*

"I Was Angry At One Person, But I Took It Out On Someone Else"

Today the children will discuss the defense mechanism, *displacement* — a behavior that frequently leads to conflicts. By discussing this topic the children will have an opportunity to understand how displacement works and thereby recognize it in themselves and in other people when it occurs. This kind of recognition can lead to certain benefits. Sometimes a child will take out his/her frustrations on a weaker or less influential individual or object (such as a little brother or the cat) instead of the real source of his/her frustrations. Discussing this topic and gaining the awareness that it may bring may equip the children to purposefully change their behavior when the urge to displace resentment is felt. A further benefit may be gained when children realize what someone else is actually doing when he/she is displacing anger upon them. Awareness gained about displacement may aid a child to realize that there is nothing inherently bad or wrong with

him/her when he/she is unfairly made the victim.

Begin the session by telling the children what the topic is and then by asking them:

"Have you ever been angry at one person (or group of people) and you would have liked to take out your anger on them, but for some reason you didn't? Instead, you took it out on someone (or something) else? Tell us about what happened."

As the children respond to the topic let them know that you appreciate their courage to tell about something of this nature. In a matter-of-fact way, reflect to them that displacement is a very universal phenomenon; probably everybody has experienced it as the unaware perpetrator or as the victim a number of times. Some of the children may prefer to just listen today, due to the challenging nature of the topic. Ask each child who responds?

"How did you feel when it was happening?"

"How do you feel about what happened now?"

Following a review in which the children's feelings are focused upon, culminate by asking them:

1. *Do you think that it is fair for people to take their anger out on someone who didn't cause it in the first place?*
2. *Why do you think people sometimes stop themselves from taking out their anger on the one who caused it and take it out on someone else?*
3. *When people take their anger out on someone who didn't cause it, is he/she (the victim) usually weaker or stronger than the one who caused it?*
4. *When people do this, do you think that they realize what they are doing?*

"I Wanted To Take More Than My Share, But I Didn't"

Today the children will begin to discuss situations in which they behaved responsibly and constructively in a social situation. By telling each other about times in which they purposefully considered the feelings and needs of others, as well as their own, they will be reinforcing themselves and each other positively for their prosocial behavior. Behavior that is positively reinforced tends very much to be repeated and the more often it is reinforced the more often it is repeated. Begin the session by asking the children:

"Think of a time when you could have taken more of something than your fair share and you really wanted to, but instead you didn't. You stopped yourself and took only the amount that was your share. It may have been some kind of food, or turns in some kind of game, or anything that involved other people and sharing. (It may have even been stopping yourself from talking for too long in a circle session.) Whatever it was, tell us about it."

As the children participate, ask them:

"How did you feel right at first?"

"How did you feel about yourself after you stopped yourself from taking more than your fair share?"

"How do you feel now about what you did?"

Discuss how feelings of pride in ourselves when we do considerate things can be very strong, rewarding and long-lasting.

Following a review focusing mainly on feelings, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *What do you gain when you pass up a chance to take more than your share?*

"I Felt Like Saying Something, But I Didn't"

Today the children will again talk about times when they behaved prosocially. Sometimes we feel like saying something and we stop ourselves, but it may have been better to speak. Other times we can be fairly sure that if we impulsively say something hurt feelings or anger may unnecessarily result. By speaking our feelings and thoughts responsibly, without attacking personalities in either overt or disguised ways, we can very often avoid non-productive conflicts. Today's activity addresses this second kind of conscious verbal inhibition. Begin the session by asking the children:

"Have you ever been in some situation in which you felt like saying something to someone, but you stopped yourself — not because you were afraid, but because you realized at the time that to say it would only get the person mad or hurt? By not saying it you may have kept a conflict from occurring. Without telling us who was involved, tell us about what was happening and what you felt like saying."

As the children respond, ask them:

"How were you feeling?"

"If you had said it, how do you think the other person (or people) would have felt?"

"How do you feel about yourself now for handling that situation the way you did?"

Following a review, culminate the session by asking the children:

1. *Do you always **have** to say what you are thinking?*
2. *When do you think it is best to go ahead and tell how you are feeling and what you are thinking?*

"A Time When Somebody Put Me Down And I Handled It Well"

This session is more complex and challenging than "If I Had Been Bigger There Wouldn't Have Been Any Trouble," which the children discussed earlier. The prior topic focuses on how we often give in or run away from some situation because we are afraid. The threat of conflict is reduced by this kind of response, but usually because of fear. Today the children will discuss how they consciously chose to handle a difficult situation responsibly and not because they were afraid.

Since each person is responsible only for what he/she says, we are all vulnerable to verbal violence that comes from others, who we can't control. In the session just prior to this one, the children discussed how they used their self control to keep from saying something that would have probably brought about a negative outcome. But sometimes other people say things to us that make us feel hurt or angry. In these situations it is even harder to keep one's perspective and self control. When we are able to keep from counter-attacking we are demonstrating, in perhaps the most difficult of contexts, our human capacity to behave rationally — to be in charge of our own behavior, despite the way we feel like behaving.

Begin the session by telling the children what the topic is and then by asking them:

"Have you ever had someone put you down and you felt like hurting them back in a physical or verbal way, but you didn't — not because you were scared to, but because you knew that an unnecessary conflict would probably result and you didn't want that to happen? Without telling us who put you down, tell us how it happened and how you handled it."

As the children respond, ask them:

"How were you feeling?"

"How did the other person seem to be feeling?"

"Did you tell the person how you were feeling and what you were thinking, without attacking him or her?"

(If so) "What happened then?"

Following a review in which the children's prosocial behaviors are focused upon, ask them:

1. *How do you feel about what you did now? (Allow each to respond.)*

"A Good Idea I Got From Someone In The Group For Handling A Conflict"

This is a very open-ended activity in which the children may tell each other what they learned from one another about constructive and responsible handling of potential and actual conflict situations. By doing this, the children will again receive positive reinforcement for their positive actions, this time directly from their peers. Begin the session by naming a child and telling him/her about something that he/she said in one of the circle sessions on conflict resolution that you considered to be a good idea. Then ask the children:

"Did anyone else hear a good idea from another member of our circle about how to help keep an unnecessary conflict from occurring or how to handle a conflict that was already happening? If so, tell the person and the rest of us what it was."

As the children participate, ask:

"How does the idea work?"

Then ask each child who was named:

"How do you feel, knowing that (Sara likes your idea about how to listen to someone when he or she is upset)?"

If any children are not named and told about a good idea that they shared in one of the sessions, be sure to tell each one something yourself that you appreciated.

In the review, ask each child who was named to tell the person who named him/her, "You liked my idea about . . ."

Culminate by asking the children:

1. *Can every conflict be avoided, or should it be?*

SUPPLEMENTARY ACTIVITIES RELATED TO CONFLICT RESOLUTION

A Communication Exercise: "I-You Messages"

As a class review the activity, "I-You Messages", presented as a supplementary activity at the end of the unit on *Communicating*, page 84. This would be a valuable activity to undertake as you begin this unit on conflict resolution.

Films On Conflict Resolution:

Three films on "The Magic Circle And Conflict Resolution" are available from the Human Development Training Institute. The three films, which at this writing are being completed, are being co-produced by HDTI and the United Methodist Church. One film is for teachers and addresses ways to present activities to children that relate to conflict resolution. The second film is for children in the primary grades and the third is for children in the upper elementary grades. Please write to HDTI for more information.

Creative Dramatics: Child Directors and Actors:

At the end of each circle session in this unit, choose a child to "produce and direct" for the class his/her own dramatic rendition of the story he/she told in the circle session. The title for each dramatic scene will be the topic that elicited the verbal response. Be sure to select a child whose story, as much as possible, demonstrates prosocial and/or insightful behavior. The child should also be capable of going through the following steps to organize the class presentation:

1. Selection of co-actors. (The child who has been chosen should play the part of him/herself.)
2. Direction of the actors in the rehearsal to play their roles according to the plot.
3. Making a statement to the class prior to the dramatic scene, explaining the setting, cast of characters, and perhaps a brief word about the situation.
4. Making a statement to the class after the scene has been acted-out regarding the outcome and answering their questions.

As the children proceed through the rehearsal stage, involve yourself as you perceive the need to encourage them and possibly even to make useful suggestions to them. Basically, however, this should be "their show".

At the end of each presentation, the child-director may ask the class:

"What are some other ways that you can think of for handling a situation like this one that are considerate and responsible?"

He/she may then call on children who wish to suggest various alternatives.

Culminate each of these activities by asking the children to tell the child who directed the dramatic scene what they liked about it. Allow no more than two suggestions for ways to improve the dramatic rendition. Then lead a discussion with the class focusing on the dynamics involved in the scene.

APPENDICES

- A "Warm Fuzzy" Awareness Topics
- B Transcript Of A Minimally Edited
Tape Recording Of An Actual Circle Session
With Fifth And Sixth Graders Led By Their Teacher
- C A List Of Affective Vocabulary
- D The "Communication Stopper" Scripts
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Conflict Resolution

APPENDIX A

"Warm Fuzzy" Awareness Topics

These topics are good ones for initial sessions with new groups. They are also good for Mondays and the first day the group is back together again after a vacation. Be sure to clarify each topic when you announce it. Jog the children's memories by asking them to think back to a *certain* warm summer day, for example. Ask them to tell how they felt, what they were doing and other questions of this nature.

- "On A Warm Summer Day I Feel . . ."
- "My Pet" or "If I Had A Pet It Would Be . . ."
- "Something That Delighted Me"
- "In the Rain I Feel . . ."
- "At Sunset I Feel . . ."
- "Little Puppies Make Me Feel . . ."
- "A Time I Was Laughing And Couldn't Stop"
- "If I Were On The Beach (Or Lake, River, Etc.) Right Now"
- "My Favorite Song Is . . ."
- "The Smell of Fresh Baked Bread Makes Me Feel . . ."
- "A Thrilling Moment In My Life"
- "A Gift I Enjoyed Giving"
- "The Funniest Movie I've Ever Seen"
- "A Nice Experience That I Want To Share"
- "When I Look At Trees I Feel . . ."
- "Warm Sun On My Body Feels . . ."
- "A Friendly Arm On My Shoulder Feels . . ."
- "Kittens Make Me Feel . . ."
- "A Time When I Felt Happy"
- "A Pleasant Surprise"
- "A Gift I Liked The Most (That I Received)"
- "A Time When I Was Alone And It Felt Good"
- "A Dream I Had That Was Nice"
- "My Favorite Musical Group"

APPENDIX B

Transcript Of A Minimally Edited Tape Recording Of An Actual Circle Session With Fifth And Sixth Graders Led By Their Teacher

The topic for this session is "How I Would Solve Someone Else's Problem," which is presented in the final Mastery unit in this activity guide, entitled, "Disappointments, Problems and Decision-Making". The session lasts about 25 minutes and is led by the children's teacher, Ms. Beth Blakemore, who has conducted circle sessions with each of her classes on a regular basis for five years.

Briefly stated, the objectives of this session are to provide opportunities to the children to (1) tell about how they were able to see solutions for the problems other people had, (2) to discuss the feelings of the people involved in each situation, including their own, and (3) to discuss why it so often is easy for us to solve someone else's problem and hard to solve our own.

The group of twelve children taking part in this session consists of five fifth graders and seven sixth graders. They are students in an inner-city school in San Diego, California. The session takes place in the regular classroom, a portable bungalow comfortably furnished with desks, a couch and large pillows with everyone in the room participating in the session.

When the children came in from their lunch period, this session was begun. It was one of the very last ones for this group to experience together. (It took place in the month of June in the 1973-'74 school year.) As with prior classes, the Human Development Program has been systematically used by Ms. Blakemore with this class throughout the entire school year. She reports that six of the students who participated verbally in this session were extremely non-verbal when they entered the classroom in September. The group sat on straight chairs during the session and were aware that it was being tape recorded.

Besides the verbal transactions, a number of other things were going on in the circle, such as attention, interest, laughter and enjoyment. It is regrettable that these affective expressions could not have been recorded too.

The children's names have been changed.

Ms. Blakemore: Yesterday in our circle we talked about problems that we had that we were able to find solutions to. Today we're going to be talking about "How I Would Solve Someone Else's Problem." I'm sure that all of you have known somebody at one time or another who had a problem; somebody here at school, somebody at church, at home . . . any place where you get together with people. And they may have told you about their problem and maybe you said to yourself . . . "Gee! Why is there a problem? There's a very easy solution to that problem." Possibly you tried to tell them how to solve their problem. If this has ever happened to you, would you like to tell the rest of the group about it?

Larry: I remember one day somebody in my family couldn't find her cigarettes and I told her I knew where she put them. I told her to look in the basement or something like that and then she looked and they wasn't there, and I finally told her where they was. I told her to look under her dresser.

Ms. Blakemore: And did she find them?

Larry: Yeah.

Ms. Blakemore: Can you remember the feelings that she seemed to have when she couldn't find what she wanted?

Larry: She thought I had them.

Ms. Blakemore: She was blaming you.

Larry: 'Cause I'm always hiding something on her.

Ms. Blakemore: Did she have some feelings that you could get a hold of?

Larry: Yeah.

Ms. Blakemore: What were they?

Larry: Kind of . . . funny feelings.

Ms. Blakemore: They were funny?

Larry: Once she'd be half playing, then she'd be serious . . .

Ms. Blakemore: Oh . . . first of all she was going to play about it, and when it got to be too long, she got angry? How did you feel when you finally told her where they were?

Larry: I felt mad. I wanted her to kick the habit.

Ms. Blakemore: You were trying to help her, and she wasn't going to kick the habit. Okay . . . that's good.

Gary: I have a question. Did she ever quit smoking?

Larry: No.

Henry: Was you trying to make her stop smoking?

Larry: Yeah.

Gary: Oh . . . the time me and someone else was shopping and she couldn't find what she wanted because she wanted to buy some new tennis shoes and she went in the wrong department. The tennis shoes were way in the back of the store and she was looking all over in the front and she couldn't find them and I asked her, "Why don't you look . . . uh . . . why don't you go . . ." and she says, "Shut up Gary" and "Be quiet" . . . and then she just said "I wonder where them shoes are?" So I said, "Why don't you look in the back?" And she Says, "Shut up" and then we was almost towards the back and she saw the tennis shoes and I told her, but she say "Shut up" or I was going to get in trouble.

Ms. Blakemore: How did she seem to be feeling about the problem?

Gary: She felt angry.

Ms. Blakemore: She was angry?

Gary: Uh huh.

Ms. Blakemore: What feelings did you have then?

Gary: When she told me to shut up?

Ms. Blakemore: Uh huh.

Gary: I felt upset because she really wouldn't let me tell her.

Ms. Blakemore: It's not always so easy to help somebody solve their problem.

Larry: Like my grandmother; she was looking for the sewing machine and it was right under her nose . . . you know . . . the towels and my pajama bottoms were on top of it, and she couldn't see it. And then know what I did? I just said, "Why don't you look under my pants, they may be under there."

Ms. Blakemore: Okay. How did grandma feel?

Larry: She felt mad.

Ms. Blakemore: She was mad. How did you feel when she was angry?

Larry: I felt like I was going to get my head cut off.

Ms. Blakemore: Uh huh. Gary?

Gary: Well, when my great grandmother didn't want to go to the hospital . . . and me and my mother . . . we got upset. We had a talk about it and then I talked to her and asked her, "How do you think it makes us feel about . . . about . . ." And the next day when I came home from school she was at the hospital . . .

Ms. Blakemore: Okay. So what you're saying is: your great grandmother was sick and she wouldn't do anything about it.

Gary: Uh huh.

Ms. Blakemore: And you wanted her to.

Gary: Yep.

Ms. Blakemore: And you actually talked to her about it yourself?

Gary: Yeah, while my mother was at work.

Ms. Blakemore: Do you remember, kind of, what you said to your great grandmother?

Gary: Yeah. I said, "It's making me unhappy about you being sick out here and you won't go to the hospital so the doctors can do something about it."

Ms. Blakemore: Uh huh. How did you feel when she finally went?

Gary: I felt happy.

Ms. Blakemore: And is she okay?

Gary: (Nods.) I have another one. When me and my friend . . . we went to the pool hall to play some pool and he didn't have no money. All he had was a dollar. To play pool it costs a dollar and I had some money in my . . . in my . . . piggy bank . . . and we went back home and got it and then he wanted to buy something and he

didn't have enough money and then I said, "Do you want some of my money?" "Do you want some money?" He said "No," and he ran out of money. And then I asked him, "Do you want some money?" and he say "No." And so we was almost about . . . about twelve blocks from home and the car ran out of gas . . . and I said, "You want some money?" He said "No." "We'll just walk home." And we started walking and he said, "Let me have the money now," because he got tired of walking (Laughs.)

Ms. Blakemore: How far away were you from home then?

Gary: About five blocks.

Ms. Blakemore: What kind of feelings was your friend having? He really had several problems, not just one. How was he feeling about them?

Gary: Angry. He didn't want nobody telling him nothing.

Ms. Blakemore: Probably felt a little foolish then . . . All those things happening to him.

Gary: Yeah.

Ms. Blakemore: Allen?

Allen: Yeah. One day my father . . . he was looking for his belt. He couldn't find it. And I helped him. It was hanging on his hook.

Ms. Blakemore: What was your father feeling when he was looking for his belt?

Allen: He was mad.

Ms. Blakemore: How did you feel when you were able to supply the belt?

Allen: Happy.

Ms. Blakemore: Any other questions for Allen? Henry?

Henry: Somebody in my family lost his keys to the car and he had locked the car and the keys was in the ignition . . . and then my mother had a pair of keys to the car and she couldn't find them because she had left them in the door. Then I went out there and got them.

Ms. Blakemore: What door did your mother leave those in?

Henry: Front door. Then I went and got the keys . . . opened the car door and got those keys . . . then I locked the door again and brought the key in. I put my mother's keys back in the door and I put the other keys on the dresser so he would see them. Then he went there and he said, "There the key is. I wonder where they've been?" I said, "They was in the car." He said, "How did you get them?" I said, "I got the keys off the front door" and he went to the front door and there they was.

Ms. Blakemore: How do you suppose . . . just try to pretend that you own that car and you just got out and you slammed the door and you looked and there are the keys still hanging inside.

Henry: But we got a thing . . . you know like you open the door and the key is down there and it makes a sound and he didn't hear it. He shut the door.

Ms. Blakemore: How do you suppose he felt when he did that? How would you feel if it happened to you?

Henry: Feel like kicking the car.

Ms. Blakemore: . . . like kicking the car. Would anybody else have a different feeling than that?

Tony: I'd be mad at myself.

Gary: I'd say to myself, "You're stupid."

Ms. Blakemore: Yeah! I . . . think I'd be with you. I'd think, "Boy, did I do a stupid thing." Especially if it makes that noise so that it warns you that the keys are still in there.

Henry: He left all the keys in there.

Ms. Blakemore: How'd you feel when you were the one that could help?

Henry: It felt all right.

Ms. Blakemore: Yes. It's an all right feeling to be helpful. Kenneth?

Kenneth: My father lost his cufflinks and I knew where they were. And then . . . my father said, "You don't know where they are . . ." I said, "Yes, I do." He had been looking everywhere for them. And I said, "Dad, I know where they are." He said, "No you don't" and he kept looking for them and I said, "Dad, let me find them." He said, "No." Then, he kept on looking for them and he finally said, "Okay, you can go look for them." They was in his dresser drawer.

Ms. Blakemore: Did you have any feelings inside when he kept telling you, "No, don't look for them?" . . . and yet you knew where they were and he was jumping all around the house trying to find them?

Kenneth: I was mad.

Ms. Blakemore: Where do you feel that kind of anger when it . . . when somebody is just really stopping you from doing something? Where do you feel the anger?

Kenneth: Right here (points to throat).

Ms. Blakemore: In your throat? Anybody ever feel it in their stomach? Allen does.

Allen: Your stomach twitters.

Ms. Blakemore: It seems to get tight or something . . . I don't know. It does funny things . . . Kenneth?

Kenneth: Well, my mother lost her twenty dollar bill and I gave her mine and she got happy.

Ms. Blakemore: Okay. She lost it?

Kenneth: Yeah. And I gave her mine from out of my piggy bank.

Ms. Blakemore: And how do you think she felt when you were willing to give up your twenty dollars to . . .

Kenneth: Happy.

Ms. Blakemore: How did you know that?

Kenneth: By the smile on her face.

Ms. Blakemore: You gave your mother twenty dollars.

Kenneth: Yeah. My mother needed it and I had it so I gave it to her. She paid lots of money for me before. Everything I ever got she paid for . . . like these clothes. Giving her twenty dollars back was like nothing after all she spent on me.

Ms. Blakemore: Gary?

Gary: Well, my mother had a flat tire on her car and she needed ten dollars to get a new tire and she had the money saved for the rent and she didn't want to use it so I had fifty dollars in my bank account and I told my mother she could use it.

Ms. Blakemore: Gee. Fifty dollars.

Gary: Yeah. My father gave it to me to put in the bank.

Ms. Blakemore: You got more than I got . . . And how did your Mom feel when you helped her out?

Gary: Felt happy . . . And now I got eighty dollars in the bank.

Ms. Blakemore: How would you like to make some nice old lady happy?

(Uproarious laughter)

Ms. Blakemore: Steve?

Steve: Once me and my friend went to the store and he didn't have no money to buy a soda so I said, "Are you going to buy the soda?" And he said, "I don't have enough money." So I gave him the money so he could buy a soda.

Ms. Blakemore: Looking at you right now I'd say you still feel good about it . . . Yeah . . . That's a real neat thing to do and you're still grinning over it. How'd your friend feel?

Steve: Happy.

Ms. Blakemore: How'd you know?

Steve: He thanked me.

Ms. Blakemore: Gary . . .

Gary: Me and Allen and my mother and my father went to Disneyland. It was about . . . about 11:30 and me and Allen went into the haunted house and I told Allen that . . . that as soon as we get down to almost at the end . . . they're going to have this big old mirror and you're going to look in the mirror and maybe there's going to be a ghost sitting beside us. Then I said, "Move over" and we was going down the hill and Allen says "I don't see no big mirror . . . I don't see no ghost in here" . . . I say, "You can't see it when you're looking in the seat. You've got to look at the mirror." He says, "I don't see no mirror" and then when we got right down to the ramp, I said, "Look Allen," and he said "I don't see nothing," and then the ghost got in the car with us and then Allen says, "Get out of the way. Get out of here." And I said to Allen, "It isn't real."

(laughter)

Kenneth: He thought the ghost was real?

Gary: Yeah, and I told him, "It's not real," and he say, "Yes it is . . . Get out of here! Get out of here!" and I showed him that it wasn't real and Allen said, "Oh, it's not real" and then we came to another mirror and we looked in and the ghost was gone.

(laughter)

Ms. Blakemore: It was Allen's problem?

Gary: Yeah . . . It was in the haunted house. Before that we started rolling and some ghost stood up and we seen this candle lighter . . . this big thing like the old candles with all those candles on it . . . four candles . . . We seen it moving in there. That's what you guys gonna see when you go over there.

Kenneth: A chandelier?

Gary: No. You know them things that they hold like they got candles on it . . . but it got clandles on it.

Kenneth: I know. That's a chandelier . . . like a chandelier.

Gary: No. You know, like they have in "Dark Shadows." We seen the thing moving by itself — moving back and forth . . . and we seen this coffin and there was somebody with green hair trying to get out, saying, "Let me out of here! Let me out of here!" They was nailed to the coffin.

Kenneth: It was a piece of wood or something . . .

Ms. Blakemore: This problem sounded like it was fun. It was kind of a fun problem.

Gary: It was! Allen said, "Get me out of here! Get me out of here!"
(laughter)

Henry: Allen, was you scared?

Allen: Yeah. And then we were going like this (makes hand motions) . . .

Gary: And then we seen this thing when we went into the Pirate's Cruise. We seen these skeleton bones and we saw this coffee pot and the lid opened up and the skeleton came out and said, "Oooooooooooh" and Allen say . . . "Ahhhhhh."

(laughter)

Ms. Blakemore: Larry

Larry: One time somebody I know couldn't find her keys and I didn't want her to go. She was going to go to Los Angeles — to Santa Maria — around there. I didn't want her to go because everybody was supposed to go to my friend's house to spend the night. But I didn't want to because I wanted to watch the "Six Million Dollar Man," but he didn't have a TV. So I hided the keys. Then she said, "Where are the keys?" She asked everybody, "Where are the keys?" and I just kept going like that, "ummm ooh umm" (humming). And then she found them in my back pocket.

Ms. Blakemore: In your back pocket? This is a problem that you created for her, right?

Larry: That's true.

Ms. Blakemore: Okay. When she found those keys, what did she do?

Larry: She say, "Come on, come on." (Yanks own hair to demonstrate).

Ms. Blakemore: Uh huh. She pulled you by your hair? Henry?

Henry: How did she feel when she felt them in your back pocket?

Larry: She felt kind of happy and kind of mad. She was mad because I hid them and happy that she found them.

Ms. Blakemore: Yeah. She had the two feelings.

Henry: Did you get to go?

Larry: No.

Henry: Stayed home?

Larry: Everybody did.

Ms. Blakemore: Do you mean that it worked and everybody stayed home?

Larry: All she went was to Penney's to buy my sister some shoes and came back.

Gary: How did she know they was in your back pocket or how did she find them in your back pocket?

Larry: She saw them . . . you know that blue thing? She found one of them.

Henry: Was it jingling in your pocket?

Larry: No. I was just sticking out.

Ms. Blakemore: Okay. Earl?

Earl: One day I parked my bike in the driveway and my father ran over it with his truck. And I talked to him that night in the den about fixing my bicycle and he said I'd have to raise up half of the money. (Laughs.) So I sold some scrap iron.

Larry: Some what?

Earl: Scrap iron.

Ms. Blakemore: Did you get the new bike?

Earl: Yeah.

Ms. Blakemore: So this was *your* problem. You had a scrunched bike and you needed to get half the money to get a new one. Okay, so when your Dad said to you, "Okay Earl, now you're going to have to save up half the money for that bike," how did you feel?

Earl: I didn't think I could do it.

Ms. Blakemore: You felt kind of hopeless . . . like it was a hopeless task for you to try to do?

Earl: Yeah.

Ms. Blakemore: Where did you get the idea for the scrap iron?

Earl: My father had it. He gave it to me a long time ago and I never put it to use.

Ms. Blakemore: Hmmm. Okay. Is there anybody who thinks that they can go around and remember what the different people have said? Okay, Henry?

Henry: First, Larry said about the cigarettes . . . when he hid them under the chest . . . I forgot . . . under the dresser. And she asked him where they was and he told her that he forgot. But he told her he didn't know where they was. And then . . . (long pause) . . .

Ms. Blakemore: Do you remember why he was doing this?

Henry: Yeah, trying to help her kick the habit.

Ms. Blakemore: Okay what about somebody else? Do you remember what they said?

Henry: Oh yeah. Gary. When he said about someone and him. They went to the . . . went shopping to get some tennis shoes and she wouldn't let him tell her where they was — they was in the back and he told us he had mixed . . . bad feelings about it.

Ms. Blakemore: Can you remember anybody else? . . . (pause) . . . Do you want to pass it on to somebody else?

Henry: Yeah.

Gary: When Henry said about how someone left his car keys in the car and about Larry. He wanted to go with somebody and he had to stay. And Larry said about his sister . . . getting tennis shoes.

Ms. Blakemore: Allen, do you remember what Steve told us?

Henry: Oh. I know!

Ms. Blakemore: Okay, Henry.

Henry: Yeah. When his friend didn't have enough money for a soda and he give it to him. And Gary helped his great grandmother and his mother to buy a new tire and Kenneth gave his Mom his twenty dollar bill.

Ms. Blakemore: Tony?

Tony: When Allen went to Disneyland he was scared of the ghost. And Kenneth . . . when his father lost his cufflinks and he helped him find them. And Earl helped himself with his own problem by selling scrap iron to raise half the money he needed to get a new bike.

Ms. Blakemore: That's right. You all did very well on that. Okay, now I'm going to ask you two questions. The first one. Think about it before you answer. Think about it for just a couple of seconds: *Why do you think it's so easy for us when we don't have a problem to know how to solve somebody else's problem? Why is that always so easy?* Henry?

Henry: 'Cause sometimes they have easy problems.

Ms. Blakemore: Okay. Sometimes the problem is easy.

Larry: 'Cause you know where they are.

Henry: You know what they're talking about.

Ms. Blakemore: You understand their problem. Gary?

Gary: It's easier when it's not *your* problem. Then you can find an easier solution for it, but when it is your problem it gets kind of hard. You have to find somebody to solve your problem.

Ms. Blakemore: You just answered my second question. I was going to ask you, *why is it sometimes very hard to figure out a solution for your own problem?*

Gary: You have to find somebody to settle all your problems 'cause it's very hard.

Ms. Blakemore: How come then Larry and you, Gary, could have the very exact same problem and you (looks at Gary) can tell him exactly what to do . . . you know how to take care of his . . .

Gary: Yeah, but I couldn't do it to myself.

Ms. Blakemore: Why is this?

Gary: I don't know . . .

Ms. Blakemore: What happens?

Larry: You get lost — minded.

Steve: You lose something.

Ms. Blakemore: You what, Steve?

Steve: You lose something. You forget where it is. Then they might know where it's at.

Ms. Blakemore: Yeah, but what happens to us when we really have a problem? What happens inside?

Gary: You lose your mind. Your conscience. You forget about it.

Larry: You get — you get . . .

Tony: You're just trying to help.

Ms. Blakemore: Okay. What was that Larry?

Larry: You get anxious.

Ms. Blakemore: Right. You get more anxious about your own problems — the other guy . . .

Henry: When it's your own problem — *forget it.*

Gary: You tell them about their problems but when you want to settle your own problems you don't remember how you settled the other person's problem.

Ms. Blakemore: Does your anger ever interfere?

Gary: Yes, sometimes.

Ms. Blakemore: Dan, how about you? Do you find it difficult to solve your own problems?

Dan: Yeah.

Ms. Blakemore: How many have you had lately?

Dan: Four.

Ms. Blakemore: You had four? Could you tell us about one?

Dan: When I couldn't find my ball. We was at the park, me and Steve yesterday and then Allen and me started to play catch. I threw my ball on the ground and I went all over everywhere looking for it, and I asked a friend if she see somebody get it. And she said, "Yes, it's in my purse."

Ms. Blakemore: She had it in her purse?

Dan: Uh huh . . . my little sister went and got it.

Ms. Blakemore: Okay. While you were looking for it, what kind of feelings were you having?

Dan: I was mad 'cause I couldn't find it.

Ms. Blakemore: Okay. Your anger, then, was interfering with solving the problem and I think really that's what happens; we get so frustrated and we get . . . What was your word? (Looks at Larry.)

Larry: Anxious.

Ms. Blakemore: We get anxious. We're upset.

Gary: We get disappointed. It seems impossible.

Ms. Blakemore: Yeah. It just seems impossible. It makes it much harder for us to think of good solutions to help ourselves, it's always easier to help the other guy.

Gary: Yeah, to help the other guy.

Ms. Blakemore: Well, our time is up. I sure enjoyed this circle. Thanks for doing such a good job of talking and listening.

CRITIQUE OF THE SESSION BY MS. BLAKEMORE:

Participating in a Human Development Program circle session is extremely enjoyable. The program helps all of us to understand each other better and our shared experiences during a school year become much more significant.

While I led this session I kept in mind the following specific objectives:

1. To give the children the experience of identifying the problems that others face.
2. To allow the children to recognize that they can help in solving the problems of others.
3. To give the children the opportunity to become aware of how others may feel when they have a problem.

4. To help the children to recognize how they feel when they can assist someone else with a problem.
5. To help the children to realize that when it's not their problem they are not as emotionally affected as the one who has the problem.

I feel that the children stayed with the topic quite well and enjoyed discussing it. There was a lot of humor going on that was not picked up in the transcript. Unfortunately, the non-verbal techniques that I used in leading the session, which are very important, weren't picked up either. For example, I will often put my hand on the knee of a child who appears to be distracted. Or I will place my arm around the child who rarely speaks or perhaps has just shared for the first time.

I don't usually ask a child to share after I have asked the children to review what was said in the session, however, Dan rarely shares during a session and he was ready to do so. Since I really wanted him to have a turn, I called on him at the end of this session when he looked ready, despite the unusual timing.

To critique myself as the leader, I believe that I paraphrased and responded fairly well in most instances. I feel that I repeated what the children said a little too often perhaps, but I was doing it for the benefit of the tape in case the children's words did not come over well. I tried to give positive reinforcement, but was sometimes judgmental in my responses. I do try to avoid this, but sometimes evaluative remarks just slip out.

In general, I believe that the objectives for this session were attained. The transcript shows the wide variety of responses that the children produce. It also shows that the children are enthusiastic about, and enjoy participating in, the program very much.

CRITIQUE OF THE SESSION BY THE AUTHOR:

I was not present when this session took place. However, I know the children in Ms. Blakemore's class and I listened to the tape recording of the session on the recorder. It came across to me as a very dynamic, heartwarming and enjoyable activity that was meaningful for everyone involved. The two main things that impressed me were the responses that the children made and the skill with which the session was led.

The responses of the children are particularly significant when one considers that a number of these children were extremely reluctant to speak at all about anything when they entered the class at the beginning of the school year. In this session they are very involved, sharing their experiences and feelings, listening attentively and even asking questions to one another about their feelings. They told about a variety of experiences that relate to the topic. In many cases they related incidences in which they successfully helped the person who had the problem and in some instances expressed ideas that I found to be very altruistic and touching to me personally. Examples are when Gary urged his great grandmother to seek medical help and helped his mother to buy a tire and when Kenneth gave his mother his twenty dollar bill, because "giving her twenty dollars back was like nothing after all she spent on me."

In some cases the children are able to openly state that they were instrumental in *causing* some of the problems that they talked about, demonstrating awareness of their own behavior and a lack of reticence to speak openly and honestly in the circle. An example is when Larry reported hiding the car keys and they were found in his back pocket. Ms. Blakemore asks: "In your back pocket? This is a problem that you created for her, right?" Larry responds: "That's true."

An example of the benefits of physical discharge as a means for effectively handling strong emotions in individuals, and in the group, can be found in the reaction of the children to Gary's and Allen's trip through the haunted house at Disneyland. Telling about and listening to this experience produced lively animation and strong laughter in the group. It resulted in establishing an even more comfortable atmosphere among the children when the laughter ceased, which I could discern just from listening to the tape.

After five years of leading circle sessions, Ms. Blakemore has become very skillful. The cumulative benefits of leading sessions practically every school day with this group of children is apparent. She has conveyed to them a feeling of acceptance and keen interest. They know she

likes and respects them as persons and they trust her. In fact, one is impressed upon entering her classroom with the obvious feeling of affection there. This feeling exists between each of the children and their teacher and among the children themselves.

Ms. Blakemore demonstrated a number of effective skills in leading the session. As she mentioned, many of these are non-verbal and it is unfortunate that they cannot be transmitted via this transcription. However, some of the skills that she demonstrates in this session that are apparent in the content are:

1. Stating the topic in such a way that continuity of meaning from prior sessions is explicit and expectancies for the present session are clear,
2. Reflecting verbally ("mirroring" and paraphrasing) to the children what she heard them say, which I do not feel was overdone,
3. Asking relevant questions, focusing mainly on feelings and eliciting full expression ("Did she have some *feelings* that you could get a hold of?" "How did you feel?" "How do you *know* he felt happy?" "Do you remember, kind of, what you said to your great grandmother?" "Where do you feel the anger?"),
4. Demonstrating the ability to identify and laugh with the children ("Yeah. I . . . think I'd be with you. I'd think, 'Boy did I do a stupid thing.'"),
5. Keeping the session moving in a tactful and efficient manner — giving everyone a turn and bringing the group's attention back to the focus whenever digressions occurred,
6. Skillfully culminating the activity by asking the questions that sparked the children to energetically discuss the intellectual component of their session and to come up with insightful statements and new vocabulary relating to its meaning.

Suggestions that I would make for possible improvement would be:

1. To encourage the children in the review phase of the session to address the feelings that were reported during the participation phase, rather than to simply mention the experiences that the participants told about, and
2. To abolish all evaluative remarks as responses to the experiences and feelings that are reported from the session ("Okay . . . That's good. "Right.")

In her critique, Ms. Blakemore mentions her own dissatisfaction with the judgmental remarks she made. I mention it again because of its critical importance. However, in all fairness, I must state that it is a problem that many (if not most) teachers face, myself included. Making judgmental and evaluative remarks to children for years in the classroom becomes a habit to teachers — one that I think we need to continue to try to break ourselves of in general, and especially when sitting with them in a circle session.

APPENDIX C

A List of Affective Vocabulary

The words listed here are from *The Language of Emotion*,¹ which includes information about each word, where these emotions "come from" and what happens to a person physically when each one is being experienced.

Admiration		Irritation
Affection	Elation	Jealousy
Amusement	Embarrassment	Love
Anger	Enjoyment	Nervousness
Anxiety	Excitement	Panic
Apathy	Fear	Passion
Awe	Friendliness	Pity
Boredom	Frustration	Pride
Cheerfulness	Gaiety	Relief
Confidence	Gratitude	Remorse
Contempt	Grief	Resentment
Contentment	Guilt	Reverence
Delight	Happiness	Sadness
Depression	Hate	Serenity
Determination	Hope	Shame
Distrust	Impatience	Solemnity
Dislike	Inspiration	Surprise

¹Davitz, Joel R. *The Language of Emotion*, Academic Press, New York, 1969, pp. 32-84.

APPENDIX D

The "Communication Stopper" Scripts

I. INTERRUPTING

Person 1: Guess what! I learned how to divide fractions today!

Person 2: I learned how to do that last week. The thing that's really hard is formulas.

1: Oh really. I was so happy when I finally learned how to . . .

2: Formulas are very hard, interesting though. Once you understand the formula you are working on it's fun. The most interesting formula for me is the way you find out the diameter of a circle.

1: Oh. I haven't gotten to formulas yet. When I learned to multiply fractions I felt the same way, I . . .

2: Multiplying fractions is easy. I can teach you how.

1: I already know how. What was hard for me was understanding how to divide them. I just . . .

2: My big sister is taking trigonometry. If you think fractions are complicated, you should see her trigonometry book. There are more numbers and little symbols in there! It really looks hard.

1: I guess trigonometry is just as hard for her as fractions are for us. My cousin is . . .

2: Naw. Trigonometry isn't hard for her. She enjoys it. I'll tell her to help you with your fractions. She can teach you how to multiply and divide them.

1: But I already know . . .

2: Hey, I have to go now. See you later.

I. INTERRUPTING

Person 1: Guess what! I learned how to divide fractions today!

Person 2: I learned how to do that last week. The thing that's really hard is formulas.

1: Oh really. I was so happy when I finally learned how to . . .

2: Formulas are very hard, interesting though. Once you understand the formula you are working on it's fun. The most interesting formula for me is the way you find out the diameter of a circle.

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1: But I already know . . .

2: Hey, I have to go now. See you later.

III. JUDGING

Person 1: My teacher is going to show us how to make wooden puppets and we're going to put on a puppet show for the first graders.

Person 2: Well, that sounds like a dumb idea.

1: It's going to be fun, but I don't know if I can make a puppet.

2: Yeah. You are kind of clumsy and awkward.

1: Oh. Well, anyway I *am* going to try.

2: Gee, that's very fine. You're a good kid, even if you can't do things very well.

1: Oh. The hardest part will probably be attaching the strings.

2: You are a worrier. You're getting all upset about it.

1: No, I'm not. It just seems like it's going to be kind of hard. Maybe I'll make a clown.

2: Don't make a clown. Clowns are dumb. Make something good.

1: Like what?

2: I don't know.

III. JUDGING

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2: Don't make a clown. Clowns are dumb. Make something good.

1: Like what?

2: I don't know.

II. PROBING

Person 1: Hi. Say, I wanted to tell you that I went to my grandparent's farm last weekend and . . .

Person 2: Which grandparents?

1: My mother's parents. Anyway, I was at the farm and I . . .

2: Where is their farm?

1: It's about 30 miles north of here.

2: Up in the mountains?

1: No, close to the mountains, but not up in the mountains. Anyway, when I was at their farm I learned how to milk their cow, and . . .

2: Who taught you?

1: My mother.

2: Your mother? I thought you were at your grandparent's farm.

1: Yes, but my mother grew up there and she knows how to milk cows.

2: Oh. Did it take you long to learn?

1: No. Anyway, I . . .

2: Why did you want to milk the cow?

1: Because I — because I just did.

2: Did you drink any of the milk?

1: No.

2: Well, why not?

1: That's what I've been trying to tell you. The cow stepped right into the bucket of milk.

2: Well, why did the cow do that?

1: I don't know. Why don't you go ask the cow?

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2: Well, why did the cow do that?

1: I don't know. Why don't you go ask the cow?

IV. INTERPRETING

Person 1: What did you do last weekend?

Person 2: I stayed home and read a book.

1: Oh. You're on restriction again!

2: No. I just felt like doing it.

1: You must be behind in your school work again.

2: No. I'm all caught up.

1: Aw, come on. The teacher made you do it.

2: No. It wasn't because of the teacher.

1: Then you're just trying to get in good with the teacher.

2: The teacher doesn't even know about it.

1: It must have been a pretty boring weekend.

2: No. I really enjoyed it.

1: You're wierd.

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1: You're wierd.

V. CONFRONTING

Person 1: I hit a home run!

Person 2: Well, why don't you just go ahead and brag about it?

1: Well, I do feel good about it.

2: You brag all the time.

1: Oh. Does it bother you?

2: Yes, and that's not all. You make me nervous the way you play. You're always trying to steal a base and taking chances. I want you to cut it out!

1: Well, so far so good. I don't make an out very often.

2: That's because you're lucky. You drive me crazy the way you play.

1: Gee. That's too bad. I only do my best.

2: Well, your best isn't good enough. You just don't concentrate like you should.

1: Oh. Say, how have you been doing lately?

2: Don't worry about me. Just get with it and improve your own playing ability.

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2: Well, your best isn't good enough. You just don't concentrate like you should.

1: Oh. Say, how have you been doing lately?

2: Don't worry about me. Just get with it and improve your own playing ability.

VII DOMINATING

Person 1: Hi. I wanted to tell you about what I did last night.

Person 2: Oh. What was it?

1: I went to the football game with my aunt and uncle and we . . .

2: I went to the game last week. I went with one friend and then we saw some of my other friends there. We sat together and cheered for the team. We cheered louder than anybody there. All the people around us were cheering too.

1: I cheered too, but the team lost the game. They almost won, but . . .

2: Yeah, I heard about it. In the last few minutes the other team made another touchdown. Reminds me of all those games last year. We lost so many close games in the last few minutes that we should have won.

1: Even if we lost it was still a good game. I . . .

2: Yeah, but not as good as the one I saw. Last week the team was *really* playing well. We started off with two touchdowns in the first quarter. The best play was made when they intercepted that pass and ran it back for a touchdown. Wow! Everybody just went wild.

1: I know. We intercepted two passes last night, but . . .

2: Best game I ever saw. I liked the way it ended too. They just held those guys back for the entire last quarter. Those guys just couldn't move the ball at all because our defense was so good. They kept calling for time out and trying different plays, but nothing worked. Well, I have to go now. Thanks for telling me about the game you saw last night.

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VI. ADVISING

Person 1: Hey, what's the matter?

Person 2: Oh, I've got a problem.

- 1: What is it?
- 2: One of my friends is moving away.
- 1: Oh, Don't get upset about it. Just make some new friends.
- 2: Well, I probably will. It's just that I'm really going to miss my friend.
- 1: Don't feel so sorry for yourself. Friends come and go. You'll get over it. Take my advice and just go make some new friends.
- 2: Well, that's easy for you to say. It's not your friend.
- 1: It's happened to me before. I just forget. That's what you ought to do. If you feel bad you have nobody to blame but yourself.
- 2: Gee, Thanks for the kind words.
- 1: That's okay. Anytime you need a friend just come to me.

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- 2: Gee, Thanks for the kind words.
- 1: That's okay. Anytime you need a friend just come to me.

VIII. PUTTING DOWN

Person 1: Hey, you knothhead, watch where you're going!

Person 2: Oh, did I step on your toe?

- 1: What's the matter with you? Are you wierd or something? Couldn't you feel it?
- 2: Gee, no, I didn't. I'm sorry.
- 1: Well get with it, stupid.
- 2: Listen, I said I was sorry.
- 1: Yeah, yeah. You're sorry and that makes it okay. You're a real dummy.
- 2: Look, you jerk. If you don't want to get stepped on just stay out of the way.
- 1: Who do you think you're calling a jerk, you big dope.
- 2: You. You big idiot.
- 1: I'm not an idiot.
- 2: Yes you are. Besides that you're a real bone-head.
- 1: I am not.
- 2: You are too.
- 1: You're a dingbat.
- 2: You're a wierdo.
- 1: Nincompoop!
- 2: Dope!

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APPENDIX E

The Dialogues For "Discerning Messages — A Total Class Activity," A Supplementary Activity For The Unit On Communicating

Dialogue I

(The characters: two children aged nine or above)

Person 1: Boy, are the tests the teacher gives ever hard. I have more trouble with them.

Person 2: Yeah. They're pretty hard all right.

1: Well, you've been doing okay on all of the tests. In fact, you've done very well. You must know how to study for them lots better than I do. I just don't know how to study very well.

2: Oh.

1: Yeah. I'll bet you could show other people how to study for those tests if you wanted to. I sure wish I knew how.

2: Hmmm. I never thought of that.

1: Yeah. I'll bet you could be a big help to somebody who is having trouble . . . somebody like me.

2: Don't worry. All you have to do is concentrate and you'll do better on the tests.

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2: Oh.

1: Yeah. I'll bet you could show other people how to study for those tests if you wanted to. I sure wish I knew how.

2: Hmmm. I never thought of that.

1: Yeah. I'll bet you could be a big help to somebody who is having trouble . . . somebody like me.

2: Don't worry. All you have to do is concentrate and you'll do better on the tests.

Dialogue II

(The characters: two children aged nine or above)

Person 1: What are you going to do this afternoon when school gets out?

Person 2: Oh, I don't know . . . Maybe I'll go over to the park.

1: Oh! . . . Gee. I don't have anything to do today after school.

2: Oh.

1: I sure wish I did.

2: Oh.

1: I don't have anybody to do anything with.

2: Oh.

1: I sure wish I did . . . You're going over to the park?

2: Maybe.

1: Oh. Do you have anybody to go with?

2: No.

1: Gee, I sure do like it over at the park.

2: Oh, you do?

1: Yeah. I just love it there.

2: Oh.

Dialogue II

(The characters: two children aged nine or above)

Person 1: What are you going to do this afternoon when school gets out?

Person 2: Oh, I don't know . . . Maybe I'll go over to the park.

1: Oh! . . . Gee. I don't have anything to do today after school.

2: Oh.

1: I sure wish I did.

2: Oh.

1: I don't have anybody to do anything with.

2: Oh.

1: I sure wish I did . . . You're going over to the park?

2: Maybe.

1: Oh. Do you have anybody to go with?

2: No.

1: Gee, I sure do like it over at the park.

2: Oh, you do?

1: Yeah. I just love it there.

2: Oh.

Dialogue III

(The characters: two children, one aged 13, (person 1) who is taking care of a four year old (person 2) for a short while.)

Person 1: Hi, come in. I'll take care of you, okay? We can play something together.

Person 2: Can I play with that toy truck?

1: Sure.

2: What if I break it?

1: You can't break it. It's made of steel. See?

2: What would you do if I broke a window while I'm here?

1: Gee, I don't know. Do you want me to read you a story?

2: Do you ever get mad at little kids?

1: Oh. Well, I guess that would depend . . .

2: Do you think you're going to get mad at me?

1: I don't know. I . . .

2: Do you ever tease little kids or play mean tricks on them?

1: What's the matter with you? Come on in, okay?

2: Well . . . okay.

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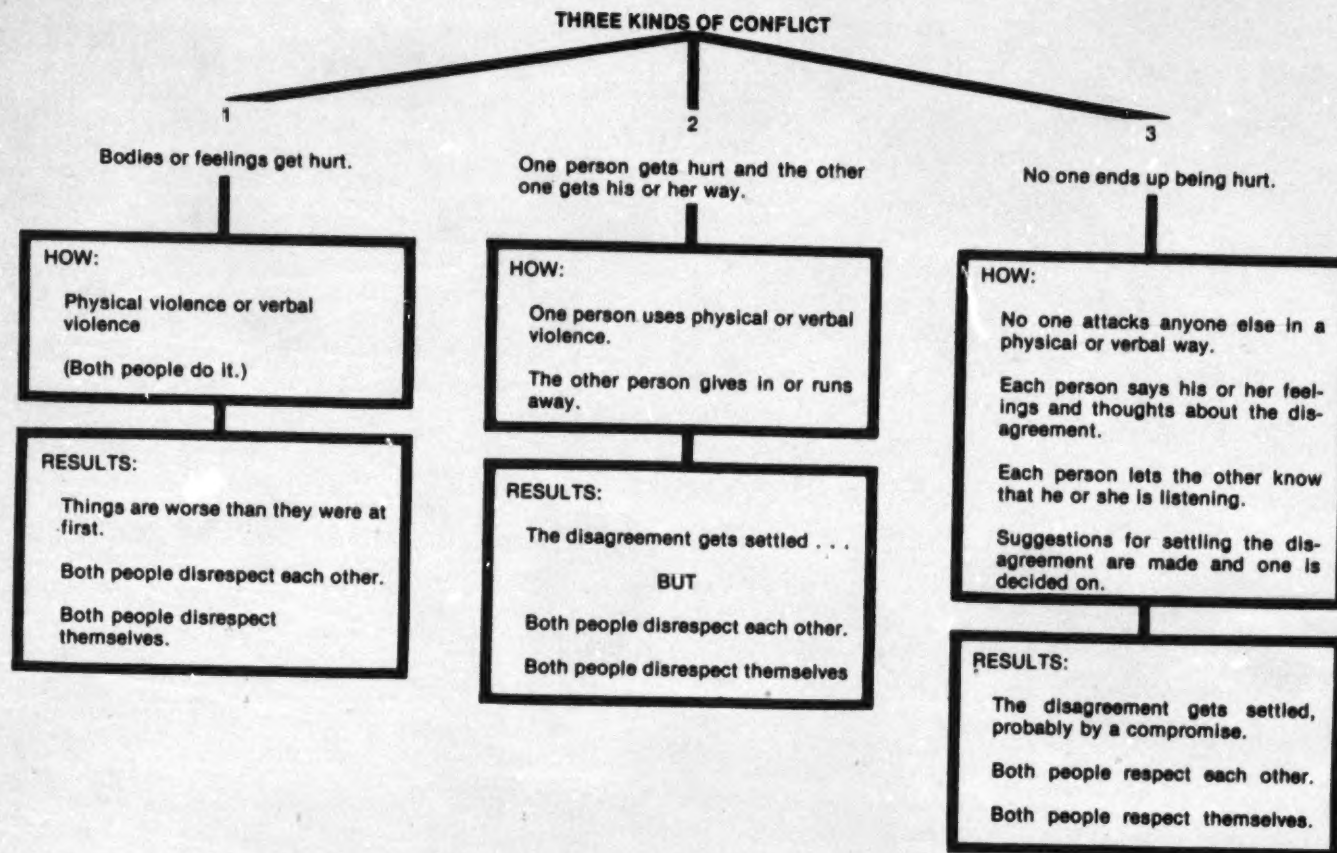
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2: Well . . . okay.



A Chart, Supplementing Unit X — Conflict Resolution,
Human Development Program, Level VI.

APPENDIX F